

# Tap water is safe

THE CAPITALIST MACHINE BEHIND  
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# University policy leaves students guessing

Protestors argue they weren't demonstrating but 'standing peacefully'

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Protestors in the lobby of Concordia's Hall building, standing silently with paper signs on their chests, were surprised when they got their photo taken by security on Jan. 21.

The group, composed of members of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights as well as supporters, were standing in order to draw attention to the current situation in the Gaza Strip.

The photos taken by security, University spokesperson Chris Mota said, are taken when people fail to identify themselves as a last-resort security measure.

Mota said blatant protesting, including the use of placards, is banned from inside any building on campus.

"The photos would be used in the investigation, because there's always a file opened, and consequences would thus be determined," she explained.

"Last week was not a demonstration," asserted one of the protestors. "The students were standing peacefully and they were [...] mourning the deaths in Gaza. It was to stand in solidarity, it was not a march."

They were nonetheless ordered to take what the university calls a demonstration outside.

"The minute you have placards, it no longer becomes a peaceful demonstration," disagreed Mota. "There's a judgment call that's made. The bottom line is any signage, banners, loudspeakers, amplification, that's a demonstration."

Concordia's ambiguous policies may be

cause for confusion.

In the university's Code of Rights and Responsibilities, peaceful assemblies and demonstrations and lawful picketing are not considered offences. In the university's Security Policy, the document says people can be asked to leave the premises in the event someone is "unable to produce an identity card" or "if the individual or group refuses to respect the regulations of the University." But no further regulations are outlined.

In compliance with article 14 of the Security Policy, police may be called to break up illegal activities on campus—but illegal activities are not clearly defined. Instead, Concordia's policy on student organizations and university space states the university "is free to exercise its discretion" in permitting its use.

Doug Smith, member of Concordia's chapter of SPHR, says the university might be too caught up in semantics and not the overall message.

"There's a humanitarian crisis in several places in Gaza," Smith said. "Some people were paralyzed and don't have access to medical care. Our work isn't over, so we tried to reach out to people in the hopes they understand we still need their help."

SPHR-Concordia will be hosting a charity show to raise funds for victims in Gaza. Proceeds will go to a Palestinian medical outreach group.

For more info on how to donate to the medical outreach charity, or for more info about the charity show, please visit [sphr.concordia.ca](http://sphr.concordia.ca).



Above, members of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights enter silent protest by holding hands and wearing placards while, below, Concordia security guards take photos and take tabs.  
PHOTOS RACHEL TETRAULT

# Parliament on the foreground

U.S. elections over, law profs mull over Canada's constitution

• GIUSEPPE VALIANTE,  
CUP QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

A day after President Barack Obama took his oath and danced at inaugural balls on Jan. 20, Canadian legal professors and philosophers turned their attention back to their own democracy.

The academics met at Université de Montréal to discuss the events that have led up to the prorogation of Canadian parliament just a few days before it resumed on Jan. 26.

While all three francophone panellists were in agreement that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's actions lacked legitimacy, their

arguments offered a glimpse into the psyche of Quebec society which, according to the polls, was most in favour of a coalition government out of all the provinces.

Stéphane Beaulac, U de M law professor, said Harper's decision to ask for a prorogation of government was an "abuse of procedure" because it effectively closed what he called the most democratic of our institutions, the Parliament.

"He did indirectly what he couldn't directly do: hold on to power."

Worse, Beaulac said, was instead of using his authority during this parliamentary hiatus to

preside over a "caretaker government"—one that wouldn't make any serious decisions—Harper decided to appoint 18 senators and confirm a Supreme Court judge.

Beaulac said he's worried that since Governor General Michaëlle Jean granted Harper a prorogation without publicizing her rationale, it sets a precedent that all Governor Generals are bound to the word of the Prime Minister, when constitutionally this isn't the case.

"It's the support of the [members of the national assembly] that gives Harper legitimacy [in Quebec]," said panellist Hugo

Cyr, law professor at Université de Québec à Montréal. "Without a majority support, he has absolutely no authority to govern because the people of this country didn't vote for him directly."

Cyr said the Conservatives cannot consider the results of the October federal election as a "win"; the Conservatives garnered 36 per cent of the popular vote while the Liberals and Bloc Québécois got a combined 41 per cent.

"Harper has to look at it as if he now has the right to try and get the support of parliament," Cyr said.

The third panellist, Maxime

St-Hilaire, who is pursuing his PhD in law at Université Laval, compared Canada's parliamentary system with what he considered ideal parliamentary and semi-presidential systems in Europe.

The ideal system, St-Hilaire said, would be one where Parliament would govern and the head of state would be apolitical, having the sole authority to dissolve parliament according to clearly defined rules.

The panellists called for the Governor General to make her reasons for proroguing Parliament public when it resumes this week.



# Student union demands bursaries from the province

## Quebec opts out of federal program

• MATTHEW BRETT

The Concordia Student Union is calling on Quebec to invest in needs-based bursaries if the province decides to opt out of a new federal program that is replacing the Millennium Scholarship Fund in the fall of 2009.

The CSU announced last week that Quebec Premier Jean Charest intends to withdraw from the Canada Student Grants Program but wants the funds anyway to invest them into post-secondary education.

But CSU VP External Colin Goldfinch says the government has made no clear-cut plan to direct the funds toward needs-based bursaries.

Ottawa's new Student Grants Program will give \$250 per month to out-of-province students from low-income families and \$100 per month for students from middle-income families.

The CSU has not contacted the provincial government about their demand, but Goldfinch said their plea is central to the platform of the federa-

tion they are a member of, the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec.

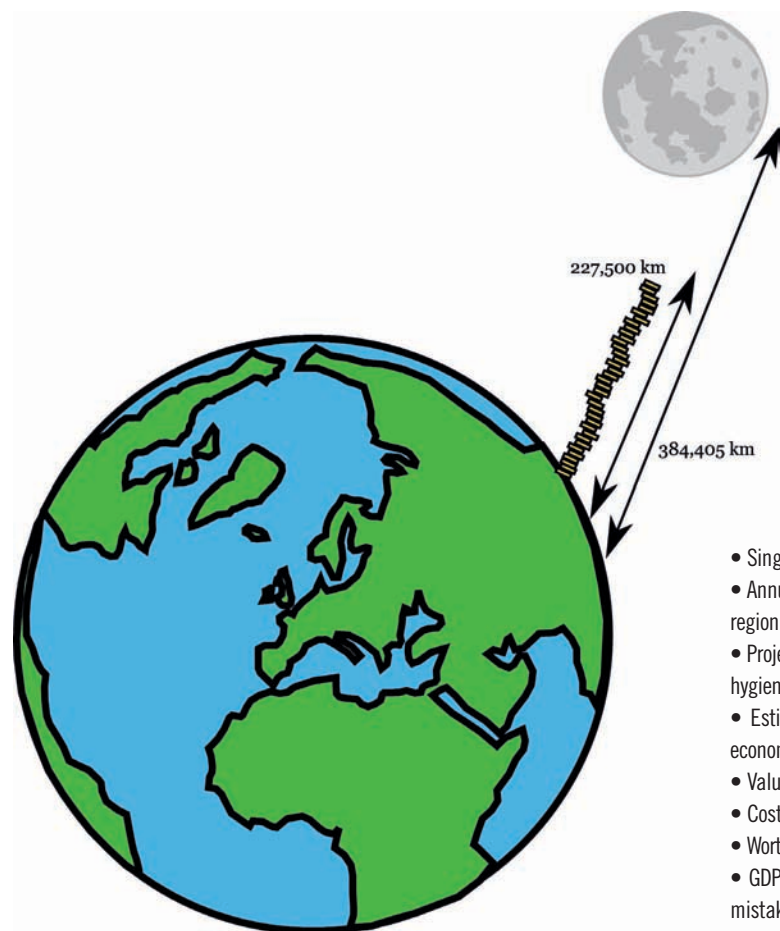
Quebec students currently have a more subsidized system than their out-of-province peers, but CSU President Keyana Kashfi said ongoing tuition hikes will push Quebec students further into debt.

In 2006, Charest introduced a tuition increase of \$50 per semester for a total increase of \$500 per student by 2012.

Concordia's Financial Aid Director, Laura Stanbra, said student debt at Concordia has remained largely consistent despite the tuition hikes thus far.

Average student debt in Quebec upon graduation is around \$13,000, while the federal average is roughly \$26,000, according to the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, which will be phased out by the new Grants Program by 2010.

"It's still a significant amount [of debt] to walk out with," Stanbra said. "However, the majority of students are able to pay off their loans."



13 billion loonies can almost take you to the moon.  
GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

- Singapore's economic stimulus package
- Annual cost of congestion in new york city region
- Projected value of the worldwide feminine hygiene product market in 2010
- Estimated effect of piracy on american economy
- Value of american porn industry
- Cost of the Challenger disaster
- Worth of the richest woman in Germany
- GDP of Republic of the Congo (not to be mistaken for the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

—compiled by Ginger Coons

# Posters advertising vacant student council position disappear from campus as application deadline nears

• CLARE RASPOPOW

Advertisements for the position of Concordia Student Union Chair have disappeared only days after they were hung.

"I know nothing of this. It's not the CSU's business to tear down its own posters," said Elie Chivi, CSU VP communications, when notified of the posters' conspicuous absence.

Chivi suggested that announcements might be "easy to miss" as they had been made in a different format, but promised to "replenish the supply" if posters are missing.

The election was called after Jessica Nudo, the former Council Chair, suddenly quit on Jan. 14.

Brent Farrington—former CSU president during 2004-05 and current Deputy Chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students—is the interim-Chair.

The deadline for applications is Jan. 30. The job posting can be found at [csu.qc.ca](http://csu.qc.ca) in the CSU Jobs section.



CSU posters for the loyola luncheon, electoral office and 101s are posted, but notices for potential Chair applicants are nowhere to be found.  
PHOTO TERRINE FRIDAY

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# Former exec no longer tied to ongoing investigation

Financial irregularity not so simple, says Castagna

• TERRINE FRIDAY

Fauve Castagna, former VP finance of the Concordia Student Union, admits she did three years' worth of finances during her mandate trying to figure out how much student money had been lost.

"Certain taxes hadn't been paid and the government was owed large sums of money in penalties and interest," Castagna explained. "It was a nice way to come into office."

When Castagna's term started in the summer of 2007, an audit hadn't been filed by the CSU since the 2004-05 academic year. The CSU's bank accounts were seized by the Canadian Revenue Agency just one month after her term started.

Despite the severity of the financial mess, details about the situation only came to light at the end of 2008.

Castagna explained her silence about the financial problems by saying, "If I were to go out there and [take] a million questions from a million people and couldn't answer them, or

[she] couldn't back it up with something tangible, I'd be adding to the problem."

The negligence by former executives resulted in a deficit of approximately \$500,000 for the union and prompted legal action against former comptroller Marie Lyonnais.

**Certain councillors don't actually listen during meetings, hence their confusion.**

—Elie Chivi,  
CSU VP communications

Councillors who govern the union admitted surprise that they weren't the first to know about the legal suit for the total amount of \$363,238.25.

"It's common for sensitive information to go out when it's appropriate," said Elie Chivi, the CSU's VP communications. Chivi said as much detail as possible was given to council-

lors during Council meetings since early November because "transparency is a priority for the union."

He blamed the lack of information in Council on the councillors themselves. "Certain councillors don't actually listen during meetings, hence their confusion," he explained.

The CSU has named Lyonnais personally accountable for the money loss in their suit because she's no longer a member of the Order of Quebec Chartered Accountants, Chivi continued.

Despite the pending court date, Castagna says that her role in the financial mess is solely "on paper at this point" and is no longer tied to the ongoing investigation.

"I'm kinda tired now," Castagna said.

Lyonais was unreachable for comment.

**The case of the CSU and CUSACorp, their corporation, against Marie Lyonnais will be heard at the Palais de justice on Feb. 23, 2009 at 9 a.m.**

## Concordia faces library space strain

Making it all fit 'a top priority' for University Librarian

• MATTHEW BRETT

An increasing space burden has forced Concordia administrators to seriously consider relocating departments from the Library building and find off-campus storage for books.

University Librarian Gerald Beasley made a presentation during the Board of Governors meeting on Jan. 22 detailing the library space shortage.

"I'm looking for downtown space as a top priority," Beasley said.

No timeline for the proposal was given, but space shortage in the McConnell building's Webster Library is a growing concern as enrolment continues to climb.

Enrolment has increased by a third since the Webster Library opened in 1992, and a number of faculties have migrated downtown from the Loyola campus, Beasley said.

Approximately 1.9 million people used the library in 2007-08, according to library figures.

"We could certainly use an extra floor, or two, in the McConnell building," Beasley continued.

The fifth floor of the McConnell building was originally intended for library use, but upper floors have recently received major renovations for

departmental use.

Space shortage was not the only area of concern for Beasley.

The library's financial data was also given to the Board. As a percentage of the university budget, library funding might be "lower than any of the comprehensive universities outside Quebec," Beasley said.

Purchasing digital material was listed as another top priority. Digital material costs on average 50 per cent more than paper material, Beasley said.

### 'Critical phase' gets critiqued

Concordia's ambitious strategic plan has entered a "critical phase" as steps to implement the plan are formed, President Judith Woodsworth said to the Board.

The strategic plan, a guide intended to set the university's direction and goals from 2009 to 2014, is to be presented to the Board for approval at the upcoming June 18 meeting following two reviews by the Senate, the university's highest academic body.

Board member and professor Charles Drainin noted direct costs of the strategic plan had yet to be presented.

"That bears very directly on the plan," Drainin said.

Upcoming presidential panels, or "conversations," include dis-

cussions about the student experience, employee management and community engagement.

Student Board representative Noah Stewart was highly critical of the conversation panels, stating the university has a legal obligation to consult the CSU concerning student appointments to any panels or bodies.

"They are not legal bodies. They are just set up to collect information," Woodsworth replied.

The CSU also neglected to make a submission to the strategic plan, Woodsworth noted.

Provost David Graham has previously chided student senators for not attending Academic Programs Committee meetings, which makes recommendations to Senate concerning curriculum and academic matters.

**To register for the conversations, please visit president.concordia.ca.**

### Government should regulate student union, Board suggests

CSU president Keyana Kashfi made a brief defence of the union's financial management at the request of Board Chair Peter Krut.

As the provincial government considers controversial legislation imposing further regulations

on the Board, Krut said there should be the same kind of concern for student union oversight.

"It's something the government may want to pay attention to," Krut said.

The pending proposal in the national assembly includes changing the size of the Board and imposing greater accountability on the chair of the Board.

The CSU faces a roughly \$500,000 deficit following alleged financial mismanagement by former union comptroller, Marie Lyonnais.

The CSU has pressed charges against Lyonnais and a forensic audit of the CSU account is ongoing.

### Closed door session criticized

Stewart said the Board took an "unbelievable" step by allowing only external Board members to enter closed session at the end of the Jan. 22 meeting.

Woodsworth said the closed session was held because it dealt with employment issues that may have presented members of the Board with a conflict of interest.

Closed sessions of this nature are common practice, Woodsworth said, noting the Board may advise its members of future closed sessions by itemizing it on the agenda.

## Gazette employees say no to contract

• TRISTAN LAPOINTE

*The Gazette's* editorial and reader sales employees voted down a new contract offer on Jan. 25, even though they have been working without a contract since June.

The *Gazette's* Ottawa bureau, filled by senior reporter Elizabeth Thompson, was recently closed. Thompson has since been picked up by Sun Media, owned by media giant Quebecor Inc.—home of *Le Journal de Montréal*.

Problems between CanWest and the Guild arose last fall when CanWest announced the outsourcing of *The Gazette's* layout to Hamilton, Ontario. The *Gazette's* writers participated in a by-line strike in order to protest conditions at the paper. The by-line strike ended in November as a sign of good faith towards contract negotiations.

## Le Journal de Montréal locks doors on newspaper staff

• JOHNNY NORTH

The management of *Le Journal de Montréal*, the most widely read French daily in Quebec, locked out its editorial and office staff Jan. 24 due to a dispute over salary and benefits.

Since Dec. 31, about 250 employees at the *Journal* have been without a contract.

President and publisher Lyne Robitaille said in the *Journal's* Saturday editorial that the current contract prevents the paper from modernizing its business model. Robitaille also stated that the Internet, free newspapers and the presence of 24-hour cable channels have severely reduced the tabloid's profits.

The current contractual dispute is over an increase in weekly hours without a raise, the risk of layoffs and a reduction in vacation time and other benefits.

Journalists and photographers at the newspaper make \$88,000 on average for a 30-hour work week.

Employees started picketing outside the paper's east-end offices last weekend. Management at the tabloid said they will continue to publish during the lockout.



# national notebook

## Post-secondary enrolment higher than ever

• **NATHAN SWYERS, THE SATELLITE**  
(MOHAWK COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY)

**HAMILTON (CUP)** - When the going gets tough, the tough get learning. That's what some experts say is the reason for the hike in post-secondary applications this year.

Compared to last year, the increase of non-high school applicants is nearly 12 per cent for Ontario colleges and almost 10 per cent for universities.

The number of students applying to university has not been higher since Ontario abolished grade 13, resulting in the 2003 'double cohort.'

George Granger, executive director of Ontario Universities Application Council (OUAC), says going back to school to get a better education is best when employment prospects are few.

## Acupuncture to treat PMS

• **LAURIE CALLSEN, INTERCAMP**  
(GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE)

**EDMONTON (CUP)** - Women looking for a new take on an old pain may be able to find relief at Edmonton's Grant MacEwan

College with help of the acupuncture program's new research into pre-menstrual syndrome.

A new study conducted by acupuncture instructor Gordon Grant at MacEwan could be the answer to alleviating dysmenorrhea, or extremely painful PMS.

The acupuncture therapy will likely treat other symptoms unrelated to PMS, such as sleeping and libido problems.

The study is the first of its kind because it will use a control group whose shallow pricks will not penetrate as deep as real acupuncture.

A similar study was conducted in Germany, but without the control group. The study proved that acupuncture was a cost-effective way to treat PMS.

## Student lobby group remains neutral on York strike

• **SCOTT MCLEAN AND SHEENA GOODYEAR, EXCALIBUR**  
(YORK UNIVERSITY)

**TORONTO (CUP)** - While the Ontario branch of the Canadian Federation of Students has pledged its support for striking faculty at Toronto's York University, the national executive remains officially neutral.

CUPE 3903—which represents York's

teaching assistants, contract faculty, and sessional workers—have been on strike since Nov. 6, sparking the cancellation of all classes, some of which have resumed. Many of the strikers are graduate students.

Despite CFS Ontario's recent \$2,500 donation to the striking CUPE local, there are no plans for the national branch to follow suit and donate funds.

## U of Manitoba target of alleged mass shooting plot

• **WENDY GILLIS, CUP CENTRAL BUREAU CHIEF**

**SASKATOON (CUP)** - Two teens remain detained at the Manitoba Youth Centre after allegedly plotting a shooting rampage at four different locations in Winnipeg, including the University of Manitoba.

Const. Daniel Ricard confirmed a boy and girl are each facing four counts of conspiracy to commit murder, and the girl is also facing various break and enter and firearms charges. Both suspects are 17 years old, so neither can be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Police initially arrested the boy on Jan. 9 in regard to the firearm theft, but later released him. They then arrested the girl on Jan. 15 and the boy again on Jan. 16 after learning about the plot, which Winnipeg

Police say was beyond the planning stages.

Ricard confirmed the duo planned to shoot and kill as many people as possible at the U of M, two secondary schools, and the Winnipeg Church of the Rock. While it was originally reported that the killings were to be random, Ricard says there was an adult targeted at one of the high schools.

Had the suspects mounted their plan, the U of M would have been ready to notify students, staff, and everyone on the campus quickly and accurately, says John Danakas, director of public affairs at the university.

That would have included text-message alerts, e-mail alerts, and pop-ups on computer screens for staff.

There is also a system of in-class notification that works sort of like an intercom, Danakas says. It is two-way, so students in a class can hear alerts, as well as send them out.

Beyond that, Danakas says there are plans in place to deal with notification of all types of hazards and emergencies.

Though he says the U of M was "tangential" to this particular incident because the suspects are high school students, churchgoers at the Church of the Rock were shaken, since the boy was part of the congregation.

The church already had plans to install security cameras prior to the threat, but the church's senior pastor said everyone is trying to resist letting the incident create a "lock-down mentality."

The two accused appeared in court on Jan 19. Charges are pending.

**THE LINK**

## The Link by-elections Feb. 6, 2009

The following positions are open:

**Graphics Editor**  
**Student Press Liaison**

To apply, post a letter of intent along with three relevant contributions up on the board in The Link office by Friday, Jan. 30.

The following staff members have contributed to at least four issues and are thus eligible to run:

Shawna Satz, Cody Hicks, Amy Smith, Teresa Smith, Jesara Sinclair, Barbara Pavone, David Kaufmann, Ketan Patel, Andrew O'Kill-Griffin, Christopher Olson, Julien McEvoy, Sarah Tooth, Charlene Lusikila, Michael Sabelli, Elsa Jabre, Madeline Coleman, Ginger Coons, Alex Manley, Pascale Rose Licinio, Vivien Leung, Laura Giaccari, Michael Sabelli, Alexandra Murphy, Paolo Mingarelli, Justin Bromberg, Pamela Toman, Jackson Macintosh, Leila Amiri, Cat Tarrants, Rachel Tetrault, Sebastien Cadieux, Mathieu Biard, Clare Raspopow, Joelle Lemieux, Terrine Friday, Diego Pelaez Gaetz, Johnny North, Jonathan Dempsey, Bruno De Rosa, R. Brian Hastie, Justin Giovannetti, Giuseppe Valiante

Are you:  
- black?  
- history?  
- month?

If you answered "yes" or "no" to these three questions, please come to the Black History Month special issue brainstorming session this Friday. Meeting time is at 4 p.m. in H-649.

Hosted by  
**Terrine Friday**  
Friday Jan. 30

Link meet and greet with  
free donuts and soda.  
Friday Feb. 6 at 4 p.m.  
ROOM H-649

# Adventures in babysitting

## Arts and Science student council decides to monitor its executives' behaviour

• CLARE RASPOPOW

Arts and Science Federation of Associations councillors elected one of their own last Thursday to attend and observe all future ASFA executive meetings in order to solve ongoing problems within their executive.

At their Jan. 22 Council meeting, councillors elected independent representative Leah Del Vecchio as a neutral party to force executives to behave themselves

**"I understand it means they don't like me."**

—Audrey Peek, ASFA president

and put an end to the conflicting accounts of executive meeting events as reported by different members.

The problems within the executive were brought to a head at the ASFA Council meeting on Jan. 15, where four members of the executive passed a toothless and admittedly symbolic "motion of non-confidence," concerning president

Audrey Peek.

The motion accused Peek of putting the interests of the Concordia Student Union before those of ASFA, not acting in the best interest of the group, withholding emails from the VPs and attempting to take control of VP Social Alejandro Lobo-Guerrero's events portfolio.

More specifically, they say Peek unilaterally deleted her fellow execs from administrative positions on the ASFA Facebook group, failed to forward a wine-and-cheese invitation to fellow executives and, according to Lobo-Guerrero, tried to take control of the yearly ASFA/CSU New York trip when the executive opted to exclude the CSU from their plans due to their "obvious internal problems."

The aim of the motion, explained ASFA VP Communications Stephanie Siriwardhana, was to encourage Peek to be more open and forthcoming in her interactions with the other execs.

Peek remained unswayed by the motion of non-confidence.

When given a chance to respond to the accusations, Peek said discussion of the motion "was not a valid use of [ASFA] time."

"I understand it means they don't like me," said Peek, who failed to see any other value in the proclamation.

In an effort to deal with these problems quickly, Council also passed motions dictating that Peek re-add the other VPs as administrators on the Facebook group by midnight that night, and that Peek and VP Finance Cathy Lin, both responsible for signing cheques for ASFA, sign contracts for the New York trip by Jan. 23 at 7 p.m.

Both motions were moved by Del Vecchio.

**ASFA is looking for staffers for their upcoming annual General Election. To apply, send an email to [ceo@asfa.ca](mailto:ceo@asfa.ca).**

**If you're interested in becoming a candidate for the upcoming election, please visit the ASFA office at 2070 Mackay, suite 401.**



ASFA Councillors elected a pacifier to keep wordy exchanges in check.  
GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

## Recall moves forward as general election approaches

### Student union president has until Friday to present her case

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

The Concordia Student Union's Judicial Board has decided to hear arguments concerning the validity of a petition that seeks to recall the union's executive and trigger a by-election.

At a JB meeting on Jan. 20, CSU President Keyana Kashfi asked for the recall petition to be thrown out, arguing that any special election against her executive would fall too close to the already-scheduled general election on March 24, 25 and 26.

"Keyana argued that with the timeframe, the JB shouldn't pursue the case because there wouldn't be enough time for the recall," said JB Chair Tristan Teixeira. "But that didn't convince anyone on the board to ignore the complaint, including myself."

Patrice Blais, former CSU president and leader of the recall campaign, asked the JB to overturn the Jan. 13 ruling made by former Council Chair Jessica Nudo, which invalidated the recall petition.

Blais rejected the Chair's claim that 1,300 of the 3,600 signatures on his petition were false.

"Had she checked the petition properly, she would see that that isn't true," Blais told *The Link* after the ruling. "But to say that two out of three signatures are false is only a way of creating doubt about the validity of the petition."

Nudo, who quit hours after rejecting the petition, did not appear in front of the JB.

Kashfi now has until Jan. 30 to submit an official rebuttal to Blais' argument for JB consideration. This will be the second of the four steps remaining before the JB makes a ruling. The remaining steps allow Blais a response to Kashfi's official rebuttal, followed by the final word reserved for Kashfi.

CSU VP Communications Elie Chivi is optimistic about the outcome of the case. "I am very confident in our position. We have many arguments that deem this petition invalid and I am sure that as we move forward with the case, the entire student body will see that this petition, from the start, was a waste of time."

Teixeira hopes for a speedy end to the recall case. "Hopefully this case should be wrapped up by the second Monday in February," he said.

## Groundhog doesn't sell

### Lack of interest in 'Groundhog experience' blamed economic downturn

• JOHNNY NORTH

Canada's answer to Punxsutawney Phil, Wiarton Willie, won't have a paying audience watching him as he predicts a long or short winter on Groundhog Day this year.

The town of Wiarton, Ontario auctioned the "Groundhog experience"—which includes accommodation for three nights and a front row seat for Willie's prediction on Feb. 2.—but it did not receive any bids on eBay.

Last year the "experience" sold for \$1,700 to a Calgary family.

Warton's Economic development officer Danielle Mulasmajic blames the economic downturn for the lack of interest, but says the town will try another auction in a few years.

### Famous groundhogs and where they live:

- Punxsutawney Phil-Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania
- Jimmy the Groundhog-Sun Prairie, Wisconsin
- Wiarton Willie-Wiarton, Ontario
- Staten Island Chuck-New York City, New York
- General Beauregard Lee-Atlanta, Georgia
- Dunkirk Dave-Dunkirk, New York
- Malverne Mel and Malverne Melissa-Malverne, New York
- Brandon Bob-Brandon, Manitoba
- Balzac Billy-Balzac, Alberta
- Shubenacadie Sam-Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia
- Gary the Groundhog-Kleinburg, Ontario
- Spanish Joe-Spanish, Ontario
- Sir Walter Wally-Raleigh, North Carolina
- Pardon Me Pete-Tampa, Florida
- Octoraro Orphie-Quarryville, Pennsylvania
- Holtsville Hal-Holtsville, New York
- Buckeye Chuck-Marion, Ohio

# 33

per cent of Wiarton's predictions have been correct.

# 100

per cent of groundhog predictions have resulted in the arrival of spring.



# Dispatches from the future of Engrish

No one owns the keys to the English language, says author Mark Abley

• PASCAL ROSE LICINIO

Aspiring English teachers can relax—they'll probably still be able to find a job if they are willing to relocate.

In the coming years, one-third of the world's population will try to learn English, says Mark Abley in the book *The Prodigal Tongue: Dispatches from the Future of English*. As English can't impress itself upon people without changing itself in turn, it's likely to change and diversify more than ever, Abley predicts.

It's normal to feel anxious in the face of change, says Abley, whether it's a changing climate or how a word like 'gay' can take on a decidedly different meaning from one generation to the next. It's better to be prepared for it.

Abley reminds us that, even within the English-speaking world, linguistic variety is the rule. For example, do you know what 'garry' means? It depends. In Melbourne, it means to flirt. In Liverpool, it's an ecstasy tablet. To most of you reading this, it probably has no meaning at all.

Whether you've been speaking the language from an early onset or are a latecomer,

we have only a partial knowledge of the inner-workings of the language we share. Some of us understand Montreal teenage slang or are fluent in Spanglish, but few of us can understand administrative jargon and doublespeak: while some call the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib torture, Donald Rumsfeld called it "the excess of human nature that humanity suffers."

English, the new world language, the new *lingua franca*, is as permeable as it is invasive, but as it spreads, other languages change and sometimes disappear, just as English evolves.

Abley takes us to Asia, one of the laboratories of linguistic change at the moment.

English words like "shampoo" and "pundit" have their origins in India, while in Japan, English phrases have infiltrated the language in new and creative ways. "Haroo waaku" for example comes from the English "hello work" and means job centre.

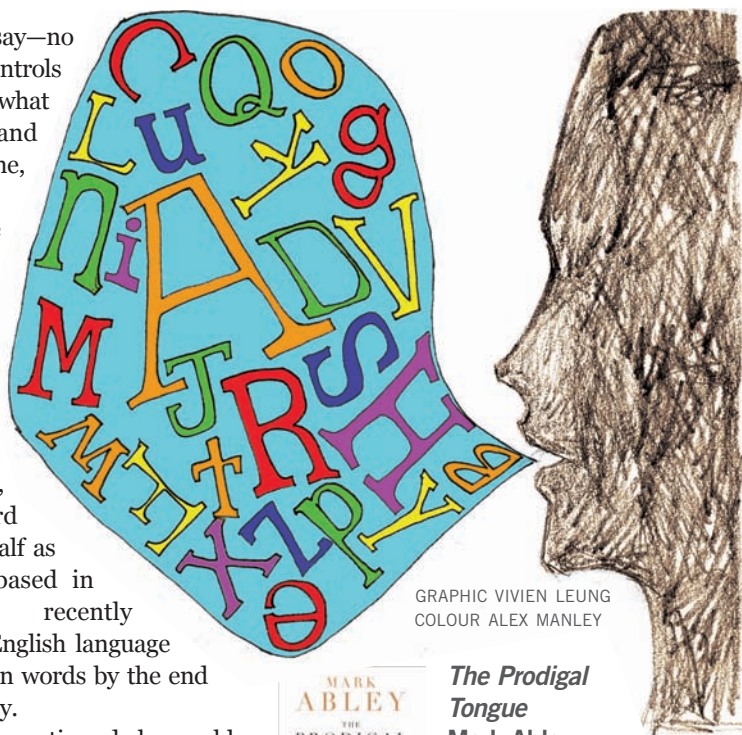
Now, Englasian, the unwritten combination of English vocabulary and Chinese, Hindi or Tamil grammars, is about to replace English as the business language of Asia. Western businessmen might just have to get used to "Come on Friday, can or not?" when dealing with overseas business trips in Asia.

So who gets to control the future of the lan-

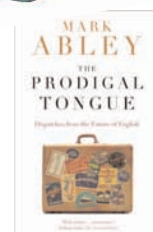
guage? It's hard to say—no linguistic authority controls English. That's partly what makes it graspable and volatile at the same time, making it flexible.

There's even some confusion and conflict as to just how large the English vocabulary has grown. As of 2009, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary has 450,000 words, but the Oxford Dictionary has only half as much. A company based in Texas, however, recently announced that the English language would pass one million words by the end of April 2009, precisely.

Abley gives us an energetic and pleasurable tour of the labyrinths of the English language. Surveying current trends and exploring change on the web and in Los Angeles, Singapore, Montreal or Paris is, in his company, a relaxing and enlightening experience.



GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG  
COLOUR ALEX MANLEY



**The Prodigal Tongue**  
Mark Abley  
Vintage Canada  
May 2008  
227 pp  
\$22.00

## Lit Writ

### Damn the Oilman

• CLAY HEMMERICH

The lion, the king of the jungle, with his luscious head of hair and his deep imposing growl spends his days arrogantly lying in an open field because he knows virtually nothing will intrude his space. The so-called hunter barely hunts. His less-than-lustrous female counterpart hunts for him, due diligently stalking something delicious to satisfy his taste for the flesh of something feeble. He's won her unconditional loyalty for life, without really ever having to do anything except let out a bass driven blood-curdling roar when he's hungry. Deep in the jungle, where the lion barely ever steps foot in, is his forgotten brother who lives in the tangle of trees and dark crevices dwelled by equally worthy hunters; he is the tiger who sleeps alone, and hunts alone.

I was so proud of my brother. He was a millionaire tycoon. He managed to save the world, one banquet at a time, while making a million dollars. He was the man that people listened to. He said to the people, "you should all live in high rises in the heart of the city because mansions are the death of our beautiful landscape." And so the people piled and piled up higher and higher and higher until they touched the sky and made love on cloud nine. Now they could afford to help pay for my brother's cause, and the hardwood floor in his mansion.

I sat there in the banquet listening to

my brother talk about the dangers of greenhouse gases and the evil oilmen. My seat cost a grand, but he's family and you can't put a dollar sign on family. Wow, he's such a good soul, giving eight hours a day, five out of seven days a week to the cause of Mother Earth. Oh, what a martyr he is. He says to the crowd, "raise your glasses with me. We are drinking our champagne in the name of our fragile environment! Damn the oilman to hell for screwing all of us over and poisoning our bodies! He takes and takes and takes! Now donate to the cause of your home and drink this champagne with me!"

I didn't raise my glass. I was the oilman that they were damning, but I cared enough about family to come and support my brother. His head held high and hands open and forward, cursing me right in front of my face, and telling other people to join in.

So the people proudly got drunk off their champagne, corked and delivered to calm their stress. They're feasting on their porcelain plates and their rare silverware. They're eating delicacies of foreign countries; tiramisu from the canals of Venice, and a charmingly-arranged dish of some sort of endangered fish, probably from Africa.

As they got drunker and drunker, they got meaner and meaner.

They said, "You rig pig! You scum! You've muddled up our floors and destroyed our lungs! You chop down trees and start wars! You kill and kill and kill,

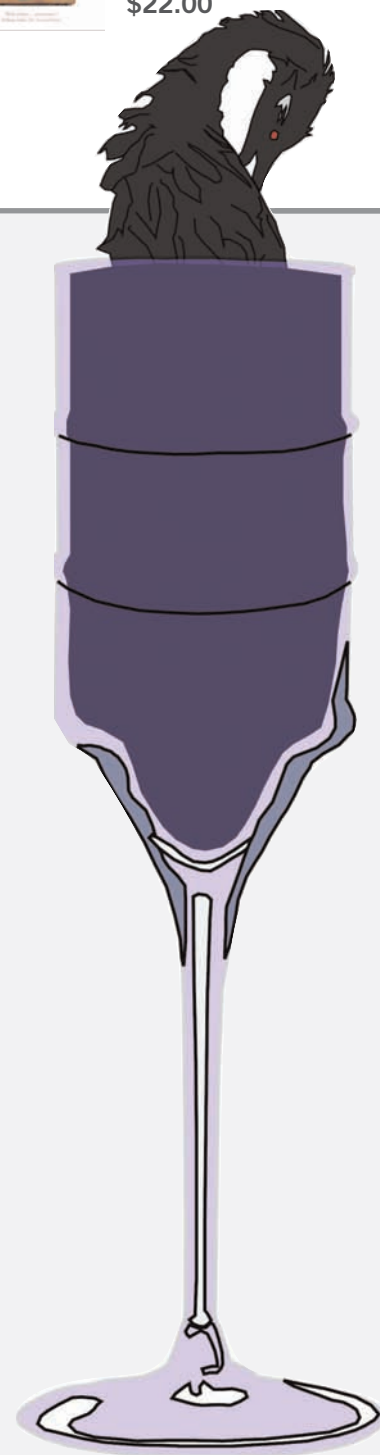
have you no remorse for the lives of others?"

They sent grimaces my way in their machine-manufactured designer clothing, listening to music off a gas-guzzling sound system. They've marked themselves with oil-based ink to remind them of when they were young and passionate and some even marked words to damn the oil-man forever. They live in a box, shielding them from the harshness of the home they're protecting. Her true colours are masked by oil-based paints, removed by oil-based cream. Their skin smoothed by oil based lotion, and their scent, of the oil based garden variety. The people's way of life is distributed to them in boxes and boxes and boxes, by a diesel truck, extracted by me the oil man who freezes away in the harshest, most dangerous, hot, cold, war driven, angry places in the world.

I get no gratification, just scowls when I come home; then, I get shunned back to the outside. But I'm okay with that because these people need me. And their families need me, and especially my brother. He needed me the most.

If only they understood why I do what I do. I bring them joy and happiness in the form of boxes. I bring them peace of mind in the form of liquid black gold. And I get paid. A lot. And the world spins, one way or another.

To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, email them to [lit@thelink.concordia.ca](mailto:lit@thelink.concordia.ca).



Enjoy the taste of oily death.  
GRAPHIC GINGER COONS

## Lit Writ

## The NGO Intern

In Aden city  
The beggars sit  
In the open sun  
Shaded by colored veils  
Faded, dirty.  
Yellow-eyed  
Somali women,  
Emaciated children  
Leather skeletons  
Clinging to sagging  
Empty breasts.

I sit near them  
And they observe me  
Seemingly  
Wary of what  
I will want  
Or require.

I want their stories, and  
They talk of Ethiopian soldiers  
Ripping the veils from their heads  
Ripping the clothes from their backs  
And news of air strikes  
From Amriki warplanes  
On villages.

And it amazes me  
People believe  
Such fabrications,  
Propaganda.

Only yesterday  
It was reported in the  
New York Times  
Online  
That Islamist  
Insurgents  
Disguised  
In civilian clothes  
Were killed in those strikes.

I mean,  
Who to believe?  
Glossy  
Reputable  
Government  
Sources  
Or illiterate, impoverished refugees  
Thrown in the sea,  
Human cargo,  
Pirate jestam  
Washed upon the Yemeni shore.

Obstinate fools  
Will not and  
Don't want  
To understand.

—Philip Fortin

To submit your fiction or poetry to the Lit Writ column, e-mail them to [lit@thelink.concordia.ca](mailto:lit@thelink.concordia.ca).

# From communist Laos to Concordia

One man's search for continual education takes him from the Vietnam War to the SGW campus

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

Somsy Camvan hands me a copy of his book, *Blanket Coffin*, and a business card with a single word on it in all caps: AUTHOR.

But in person, he's nothing if not self-deprecating, apologizing for typos that should really be blamed on his copy editor, and asking me to forgive him for his sometimes jittery use of the English language.

For someone who became a journalist at age 19, just as the Vietnam War was coming to a slow, painful close, and who spent the next two years in a Laotian internment camp for daring to continue his education abroad, Camvan is the last person who needs to apologize.

"I prefer not to call it a biography, but rather 'historical fiction,'" says Camvan. And who could blame him? Nowadays, it's better to have an ounce of truth to a lie, than a drop of fiction in an autobiography. While *Blanket Coffin* follows Camvan's life closely from chapter eight onwards—around the time the protagonist is imprisoned by the country's new communist regime—the book's first seven chapters deal with the country's opium trade, which affected virtually everyone's lives in Laos.

This is how Tiny, the story's protagonist, loses his parents: "The centre claimed that my father and mother died of an overdose," writes Camvan. The only question is whether it was an overdose of opium or painkillers.

"There were rumours of this going on in Laos," says Camvan, with an air of suspicion, although the mere mention of it in his book suggests he believes it without a doubt.

Opium had been a major staple of the country's economy, but "our lives were now being threatened because it was decided by the rest of the world that our farms were illegal," continues his narration. Just as the United States was withdrawing from Vietnam, a large part of the Laotian population was suffering from the symptoms of its own withdrawal, and rather than treat patients' symptoms, the easiest solution came in the form of a lethal injection.

While Tiny's only sibling died before he had a chance to walk, Camvan has eight siblings of his own back home,

including a brother who currently works in the government and who found the book's more controversial assertions "troubling."

But he wasn't the first to think so. In 1999, around the time Camvan became a part-time student at Concordia University, he began preparations for a trip back home. When he told the First Secretary at the Laos Embassy in Washington that he was planning to do research for a book, the next question that came naturally to their mouth was "what kind of book?"

Warning Camvan that he might have trouble returning home to his family in Laos if he were to announce certain blotches on his country's past, Camvan practiced self-censorship, stripping his book of 350 plus pages of prose.

"Some of it was just to bring it to a good word count," claims Camvan, but self-censorship was an ingrained trait in Laotian journalists in the years of nation building following American withdrawal from the region.

In fact, the biggest story Camvan ever broke wasn't even his. While dining with

an Australian journalist one night, Camvan became an unwitting informant.

"I thought I was just having a private conversation," says Camvan, but when his anecdotes about rampant poverty in Laos gained international attention, he was placed in detention for three months. The experience made fodder for his third novel—the rights to his second novel, *American Ghost*, remain with his former publisher—but it also brought him in contact with his future wife.

Though a slip of the tongue rocketed him to international headlines, Camvan is still trying to get the word out about *Blanket Coffin*.

His former publisher, Publish America, is a print-on-demand service, and doesn't spend much on advertising. Since the book's release, Camvan has been whipping up his own publicity, picking up the tab for flights to faraway lands on the slightest possibility that it will lead to some free publicity.

Despite the hints of what he left on the cutting room floor—"I love it, because it's so traumatic," says Camvan of the descriptions of prisoner abuse he removed from the book's final draft—a great deal

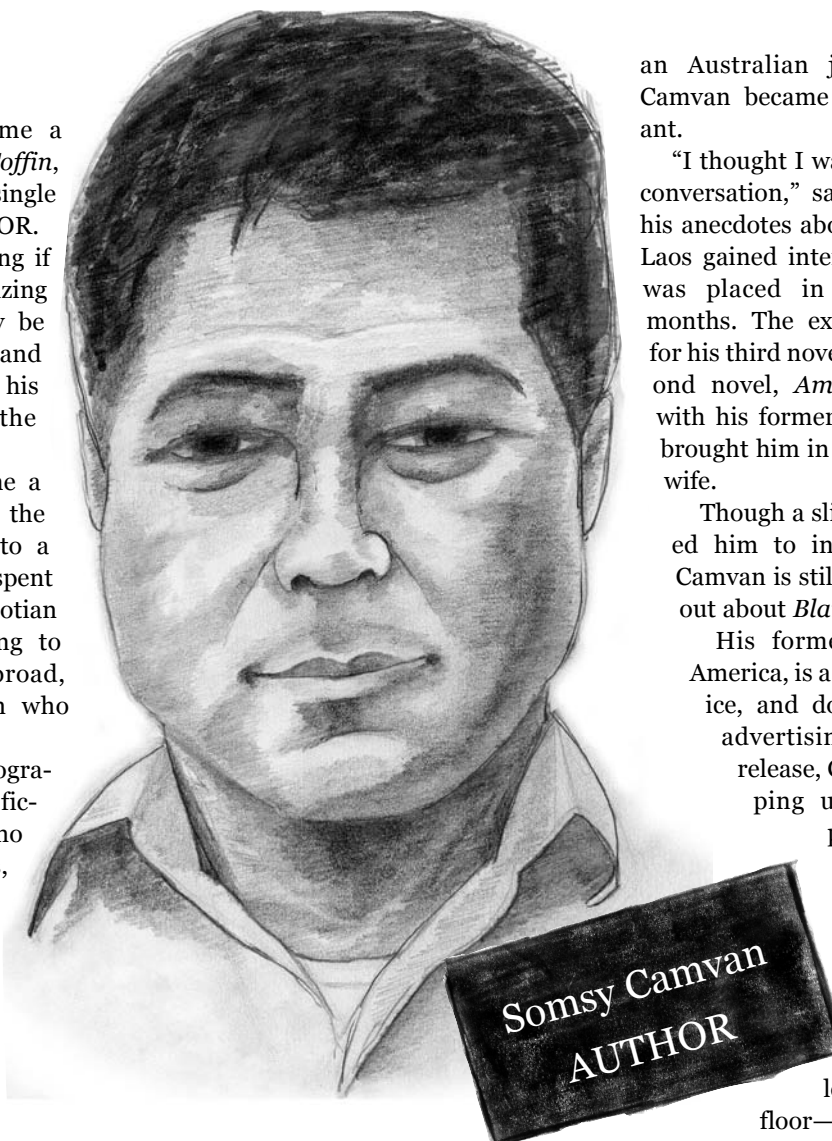
of sexually evocative undertones permeate throughout. Sex did indeed occur in the camp, confirms Camvan, but you'll have to consult his original draft for the precise details.

*Blanket Coffin* has a compelling narrative, made more engrossing by its candid depiction of a prolific event in human history. That we still don't know the full story yet, whether by force or self-constraint, makes it an important read as well.

*Blanket Coffin* can be purchased at the Concordia Solidarity Co-op Bookstore, or from [publishamerica.com](http://publishamerica.com).



**Blanket Coffin**  
Somsy Camvan  
Publish America  
October 2007  
224 pp  
\$24.95



Somsy Camvan spent two years in a Laotian "Learning Camp" for daring to study abroad. GRAPHIC CHRISTOPHER OLSON





A shortwave radio enthusiast conjures tales of mystery, conspiracy and community

• R. BRIAN HASTIE

A strange obsession

I have a confession to make: I spent most of my summer evenings last year outside until the early daylight hours, listening to the skies. Armed with a shortwave radio, a cable and a laptop, my friend Evan and I spent our evenings travelling the dials, looking for strange messages permeating the bands.

Whenever a hopeful candidate presented itself we would hit record, saving the transmission directly onto the laptop for posterity. Sometimes it was talk shows, sometimes it was news reports and other times it was simply someone reading the weather across North America.

We kept logs on a spreadsheet of when we heard what, on which channel, at what time. The next night we would reconvene to review the audio and check out the spreadsheet, updating it nightly. Though we didn't know how this tradition started, we continued it with a certain fervour that we attributed to a constant sense of never fully knowing what's out there.

We thought we were alone in this endeavour, a strange mission that seemed never-ending but very rewarding when successful.

It turns out we weren't alone. Every year across the country, thousands of people use their shortwave radios to pick up scraps of static and pieces of information. Shortwave enthusiasts say that half the fun is the hunt, the search for the elusive signal that carries with it a coded message or an interesting tidbit. The other half of the fun is actually listening to the messages found.

Dave G., a shortwave enthusiast from Montreal who I met during my online travels, agrees. "I've been doing this for five years, and the best part about DXing (the slang term for hobbyists listening to shortwave stations) is definitely the search for the mysterious and the new."

G. records interesting finds and, thanks to the magic of the Internet, convenes with other DXers on forums, uploading interesting clips and analyzing their content to see if anyone can make sense of it.

The Internet has been a godsend for users, like G., who originally communicated with each other via occasional newsletters. The 'net allows users to interact with each other, as well as share information and queries that are answered almost immediately.

A typical posting on an internet message board will have the poster list off their geographical location and then ask if anyone else in the area can identify a signal, or if anyone else had come across a similar signal on a different wavelength during a similar period. This sort of activity is common and allows for an informal network to establish itself and prosper.

"The 'net's a great tool for connecting," G. says. "In the past couple of years it's allowed me to be able to clear up some personal queries I've had for years. I usually just post on one of the bigger DXing sites and usually within the week I get an answer. A lot of signals that had formally been ongoing mysteries were cleared up pretty quickly."

The Internet also gives validation to members who DX and don't even know why; it lends to them a sense of community and common purpose.

"At first I thought it was a solitary activity, and in certain ways it is, but now I know I can at least use the Internet to communicate with people who share the same enthusiasm I do. It helps me sleep better at night," laughs G.

The mechanics behind the magic

Shortwave signals work by emitting radio waves at such a frequency that they are bounced down by the ionosphere, effectively allowing the messages to orbit the Earth. Time of day, as well as the season, play a role in how well these messages are received; at night frequencies lower than 12 MHz work best.

The cold also helps the signals travel through the atmosphere better, so winter is a preferential time for DXers—that and the fact that there are more night-time hours. The shortwave band extends from 3 MHz up to 30 MHz, but most signals transmit at lower than 10 Mhz. Signals can be picked up better if a tall antennae is installed near a receiver. These antenna can go as high as the user would like, but sometimes local statutes limit the height of antennae.

International news stations and religious organizations wishing to pick up new recruits use the bands. Political stations make sporadic appearances, as well as shows and stations dedicated to fringe topics.

Some stations serve little purpose beyond the mundane. Transmissions in-between planes travelling cross-continently, weather reports emanating from various airports as well as sea ship transmissions can all regularly be picked up.

The bands are also used for less-than-official proceedings. Though denied by officials internationally, certain stations appear regularly, their intent secret in nature. Coded number stations, disseminating secret information to operatives around the world, still exist to this day.

Spy vs. spy

In 1997, *the Conet Project* was released and brought the phenomenon of number stations to international attention. The project was a 4-CD set of recordings by Akin Fernandez, a British man who spent years collecting records of coded messages in-between countries and spies abroad. Dubbed "spy radio's greatest hits", the messages are often sequences of seemingly random patterns repeated at regular intervals, in a variety of languages, preceded or followed by small musical interludes.

One of the most famous number stations is the Lincolnshire Poacher, a station emanating from the island of Cyprus. Suspected to be broadcasting messages on behalf of the

Royal Air Force, the station played two bars of the English folk song over and over at regular intervals, followed by sequences of five numbers. As of late summer 2008, the station has been discontinued.

In 2001, the United States government prosecuted a group of Cuban transplants in Miami who had been sending coded transmissions back to the island. Although never directly acknowledging the fact that these covert radio stations exist to keep in contact with spies, the group was still prosecuted and found guilty of failing to register as foreign agents as well as conspiracy.

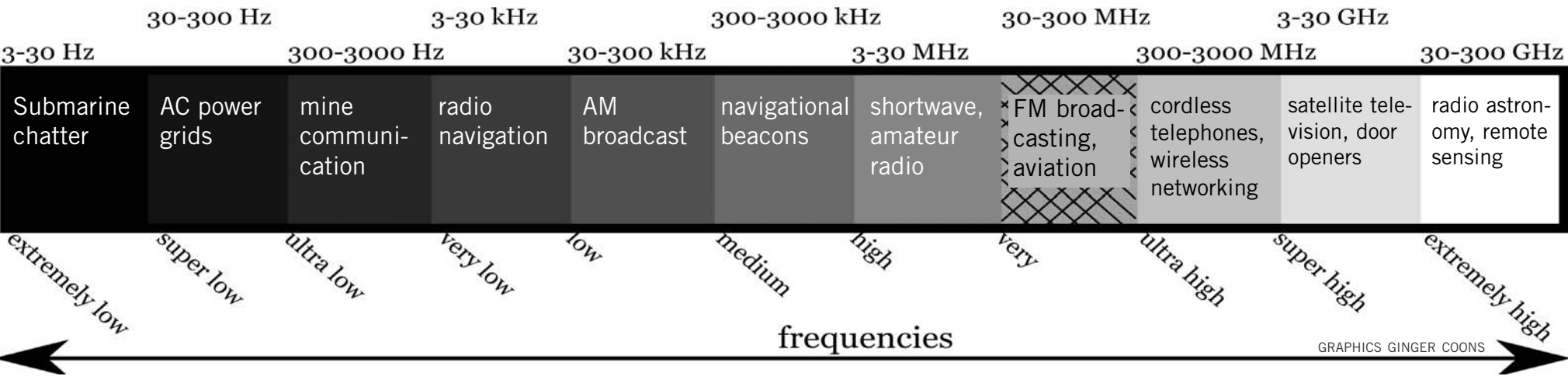
The infinite skies

One night in late August, Evan and I hit paydirt; shortly after 3 a.m. we locked onto a transmission located at 3685Mhz. We'd had false alerts before—a number of times people reading off statistics were mistaken as agent-provocateurs, only to be revealed as news-readers seconds later as they continued onwards with their story.

But this time there was no mistaking what we were hearing—a woman read off strings of five numbers, paused for a second and then evenly read out another five numbers. She did this for another 27 minutes, until the clock reached exactly 3:30, and then she stopped. Evan and I beamed, after so many false starts we had finally succeeded. We wrote the station down and revisited it the night after, and just like clockwork she came on.

This fuelled our search and DXing habit, knowing that there was always another signal to pick up, another message to record, another set of secrets to be a part of. Stations reading numbers are part of an intricate spy game, and listening in felt like joining in on these shenangians, the ionosphere allowing us to play part in the game without any of the stakes.

And the night skies never stop the signals from coming, a mixed bag of static and crackling coded messages.



## The DOWN-LOW

Events listing  
Jan. 27-Feb. 2

### MUSIC

Tom Fun Orchestra  
Armed with an accordion, banjo, stand-up bass (and the like), one can only begin to imagine what these Nova Scotians bring to a packed venue.  
Wednesday, 8 p.m.  
Petit Campus, 57 Prince-Arthur Street E.  
Tickets \$12  
514-790-1245  
cafecampus.com

Typecast & Lennie Moreno & A.O.T. Live w/ DJ Sarcastic  
Montreal hip-hop and soul acts gather under one roof to launch new material for 2009  
Saturday, 9 p.m.  
Petit Campus, 57 Prince Arthur E.  
Tickets \$8, \$10 at the door  
cafecampus.com

The Dears  
Indie rock darlings formed in 1995 in Montreal.  
Saturday, 7 p.m.  
St. James United Church, 1435 City Councillors Street  
Tickets \$20

Yellow Door Choir  
"A Million Acts of Green" is the choir's ecologically themed concert and will be a warm oasis of music in the cold dark night.  
Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m.  
Unitarian Church of Montreal, 5035 De Maisonneuve Blvd. O.  
Tickets \$20, and \$15 for students with ID  
514-738-9052

### Theatre

*The Real Inspector Hound*  
by Tom Stoppard  
Today, 8 p.m.  
Mainline Theatre, 3997 St-Laurent Blvd.  
Tickets \$20  
mainlinetheatre.ca

### Film

Darryl's Hard Liquor and Porn Film Festival  
The hottest counter-culture cinema ticket in town and might just be the most fun you'll ever have—standing up or sitting down—in a theatre. Audience members are encouraged to dress up as their inner porn star.  
Saturday, 9 p.m.  
1195 St-Laurent Blvd.  
Tickets \$10, 19+ only  
hardliquorandporn.com

*In This World*  
By Michael Winterbottom  
QPIRG-Concordia's Keeping It Reel! Subversive Film Series presents a film about the hazardous journey of two Afghan boys, and will be followed by a discussion period involving local migrant justice groups.  
Free  
Thursday, 7 p.m.  
1500 de Maisonneuve Blvd. O Suite 204  
info@qiprgconcordia.org

—compiled by Johnny North

# Five cool kids, one film collective

## Member of Pablo Pictures talks film, ice cream and Fuck, Marry, Kill

• NICOLA JANE YOUNG

The lighting was dim enough that everyone and their grandmother looked sexy and there was enough liquor to drown a sorority.

It was the premiere party at a Van Horne loft for a Montreal-based collective of young filmmakers that call themselves Pablo Pictures.

Brought together by Ben Jackson, the group also includes Dsanni Njoroge Karanja, Guillaume Parisien, Isaiah Cunally and Ayan Bihi. They united this past fall in hopes of keeping each other warm in the face of winter in Montreal.

More importantly, they sought to open themselves up to collaborative opportunities by sharing ideas big and small, and introducing one another to different techniques and mentors that have helped propel each of them forward in their solo endeavours.

Guests at Friday's showcase got a chance to see a few completed short films, as well as previews for some works in progress. Upcoming projects look to include quality fight sequences and somewhat tired hip-hop video clichés, like superfluous champagne consumption while wearing sunglasses and not giving a fuck.

Showing merit were completed films like *Shattered*, the only work thus far on which the whole team has collaborated turned out to be the standout feature of the evening—surely no coincidence.

*Shattered* follows the experience of a young woman swallowed by an overwhelming city as she deals with the aftermath of being sexually assaulted. The film addresses the sometimes devastating effects such an experience can have on personal relationships, particularly those romantic in nature.

While some of the other works shown at the showcase were perhaps over-indulgent in terms



Ayan Bihi is currently working on both an experimental feature film, and a music documentary.

of special effects, *Shattered* practiced comparative restraint in that realm, which ultimately worked to its benefit.

Bihi, who got her start in photography, is the sole female member of Pablo Pictures and came up with the concept for the film before approaching Jackson with her vision. Together they wrote a script, which over the course of a year became an often-disturbing film that is sure to linger in the minds of viewers, whether they personally relate to the storyline or not.

Bihi was kind enough to meet on Saturday over mint chocolate-chip and coffee ice cream, a bizarre choice considering the weather and the arguable flavour clash. She defended her decision self-mockingly, "What did you expect? I'm soooo experimental!"

Bihi seemed happy with the way the premiere went, and was gracious about praise for *Shattered*. She wasn't nervous about the showcase, but she did admit to preparing the ideal relaxing meal for dinner that evening, "double-cream brie with baguette, walnuts and honey. De-li-cious!"

Bihi claims to have loved watching the audience reaction for better or worse. "I actually found that part quite entertaining, I guess because at that point I really got to see my idea actualized and complete the process by sharing it with others, knowing I could affect them in one way or another. It's a rewarding feeling."

The interview ended with an innocent game of Fuck, Marry, Kill. I offer her Matt Dillon circa *Rumble Fish*, Kevin Bacon circa *Footloose* and Rob Lowe circa *St. Elmo's Fire*. She decided to kill Rob Lowe as she was "just not feelin' it," marry Matt Dillion because "duh," and do Kevin Bacon because "he's kind of sexy, isn't he?"

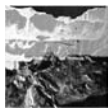
Bihi looks forward to further fun with her Pablo Pictures counterparts in the future. As for solo work, she's currently at work on an experimental feature without dialogue called *Zebzezza* and a mockumentary called *La Force* which she describes as "kind of a *This Is Spinal Tap* about an all-girl electronica sensation."

For more information or to watch the preview for *Shattered* visit [pablopictures.com/shattered.html](http://pablopictures.com/shattered.html)

## spins

### Castle Donington *Fantasy Black Channel*

Parlophone Records



I was told I would probably enjoy *Fantasy Black Channel* by a friend and, after listening to the album, I'm concerned he thinks I have attention deficit disorder. While the album consists of songs with a good melody, and solid build-up, the frequent interruptions of what I can only assume are garbage cans hitting the synthesizer don't add up. The opposite was also frequent, as my finger hovered over the skip button, a distorted jumble of noise would turn into a euphoric aural experience.

I'll be honest, I have mixed feelings about this album. I'd been listening to "Bathroom Gurgles" on my daily walks to school without knowing what it was—a great song, but by

who?

One guess.

If an album was judged by its best track only ('Focker,' in case you were wondering), I'd give it my two thumbs up. But the album's highs don't make up for the jarring lows and two thumbs, becomes one thumb. Sorry, "Bathroom Gurgles."

3/5

—Mathieu Biard

### Lights *Lights*

Underground Ops



A sugary, high-pitched voice with synthpop backing makes *Lights* a likely candidate to spend a few years flirting with the Canadian Top 20 pop charts. Don't get me wrong, it's not a bad EP, but I've seen too many Canadian pop acts toil in obscurity for an album or three before fading to little more than a faint

memory of a relatively popular song. Nothing here is particularly new, the tracks sound like ones I've heard a thousand times before, but her voice is pretty sweet and, admittedly, a couple songs do get stuck in your head. So, if vaguely new wave, and definitely sugary pop sound like a good time to you, check out "February Air." If not, don't bother.

2.5/5

—Sebastien Cadieux

### Sean Nicholas *Savage Little Submarine*

Arbutus Records



The simple sound of Sean Nicholas Savage's sophomore record makes it seem as though this album was geared towards the pre-school set. But, after listening for a few minutes, the toe-tapping tunes with synth accompaniment and water-

colour album art transported me back to the summer days of my childhood; swimming, video games and sticky-sweet popsicles.

His voice is genuine, a little on the soft side, and sometimes, endearingly, it sounds as though he's reaching for notes just outside of his range. For the most part, the lyrics maintain a child-like quality, and although *Savage* sometimes veers into darker territory he keeps it PG. And, while *Savage* allows a hint of Tiny Tim as he lets his voice quiver, it doesn't feel gimmicky or unpleasant.

The longest track clocks in just over two and a half minutes so this 11-track record flies right by, invoking a sense of child-like wonder. For dreamy pop tunes that leave you aching for mom's signature oatmeal-chocolate chip cookies, *Savage* has your number.

3.5/5

—Sebastien Cadieux



# Concordia grad breaks sound barrier

## Analysing the way we communicate through art

• HEATHER ANDERSON

While hasty judgements abound in our frenetic age, Concordia Fine Arts graduate Magalie Comeau questions quickness of speech. Comeau is presently displaying her 10 latest works at Galerie art mur under the banner, *The Emergence of Significant Being*.

The show examines the deconstruction of language through the process of deceleration, the interplay between space and the individual.

Comeau has recently come into the spotlight with her breathtakingly unique representations of pre-linguistic space. In *The Emergence of Significant Being* large, austere canvases give way to eruptions of fine detail that hint at familiar forms but resist definition.

Comeau's crafting is so precise that her pieces appear to have been created with the aide of computers or a pressurized painting device. To the contrary, her skilled rendering is a mockery of such conveniences.

Reacting to the business of modern life, and the arbitrary nature of language, Comeau has set out "to know why one adopts a particular perspective over another." Her hypothesis: "Our way of dealing with our environment, our context, comes from how we consider ourselves, whether we go quick-

ly or slowly," the artist explained in an interview at her St-Henri studio apartment earlier this month.

Comeau's apartment is not unlike her work—open surroundings punctuated with elegant details emphasize her preoccupation with what she calls her latest experiment: the dialogue between the individual and space itself.

Comeau offers a formal conclusion to her experiment in her painting, *Images: A new form of language without words*.

Consciously repositioning herself throughout the creative process, Comeau seeks to create images that destabilize the viewer. She describes her work as, "A language caught in the act of forming itself, concretizing, [...] in order to see if we are capable of letting go of our perspectives."

When asked to place her work within a larger social context, Comeau asserts, "There are so many ways for humans to interact that are never explored. The speed of our world prevents us from truly developing ourselves. I think that it is very urgent that we start to imagine something other for ourselves, in order to have new ideas about how we function."

*The Emergence of Significant Being* is open until Feb. 21 at Galerie Art Mûr, 5826 St-Hubert Street.



One of Magalie Comeau's oil on canvas paintings.

# Hugging trees and growing democracy

## Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai takes Kenya back one root at a time

• CHRISTOPHER OLSON

British colonists in Kenya practiced mass deforestation in the name of modernization, inadvertently turning vast areas of arable land into arid desert.

Deforestation not only eroded native Kenyan culture, but the removal of root systems caused soil erosion and dust storms.

"There was something in our people that helped them conserve those forests [in the first place]," says Wangari Maathai, a native Kenyan and humanist whose charity work is inseparably connected with her environmental work. She's also the subject of *Taking Root*, the next film to screen at Cinema Politica.

It's difficult not to note the symbolic loss of aboriginal traditions with the uprooting of native trees, or the destabilization of the soil with the destabilization of Kenya's ruling body. It's even more tempting to compare Maathai's Green Belt Movement and its tree-planting project with the rediscovery of Kenya's cultural roots.

"It's such a perfect analogy, but it doesn't end there," says Lisa Merton, who directed the film with husband and long-time collaborator Alan Dater. "The British brought invasive plants such as the eucalyptus tree, which consumes large quantities of drinking water [and proves almost impossible to eradicate]." That wasn't the only European influence to grow roots though.

Despite the 1963 election, which resulted in Kenya freeing themselves from British rule and creating its own government, the new regime disallowed multi-party elections, and

continued the British colonists' misguided practice of deforestation.

The government threw everything it had at Maathai and her progressive crusade, belittling her as a woman of little or no consequence or social standing, despite being the first East African woman to earn a Ph.D. But



The Green Belt Movement planted an astounding 35 million trees.

that line of attack proved ineffective and even downright embarrassing for President Moi, who held a dictatorial control over Kenya for 22 years.

By downplaying her ability to affect matters of state, Moi made her victories—like halting construction in Kenya's Uhuru Park, the country's only national park—all the more monumental, especially when the construction plans included a monument to the country's president.

Maathai and the Green Belt Movement recognized just how interconnected the issues

of humanitarianism and the environment were, so while the environment may not depend on the survival of the human race, no human could survive without the environment. Maathai also speculated that HIV/AIDS was a Western weapon made to devastate the African people, although she later recanted such statements—that's one environmental correlation that, unlike the eucalyptus, didn't hold any water.

Taking Root, it should be noted, is also a film about the uphill battle of the sexes. Her opponents continuously attacked Maathai's womanhood, still she wasn't afraid to strike back at them by baring her breasts.

Think burning bras sends a strong cultural message?

According to Kenyan tradition, any woman who is your mother's age is also your mother, and for a woman to bare her breasts is a deep insult. It's a sexist tradition that nevertheless proved a successful last resort when Moi's government bore down on protestors demanding free elections.

Maathai finally had something to celebrate after 30 years of protests and progressive movements, when in 2004, President Moi ended his 22-year reign, and Maathai was elected Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources. Little did people know that it would all start with the seed of an idea.

Taking Root will be screened on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m., Room H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd.. For a full list of screenings, check out [cinemapolitica.org/concordia](http://cinemapolitica.org/concordia)

# Café and cigarettes

Actor, writer and director of Theatre 314, on his latest production and the Montreal art scene

• ALEXANDRA MURPHY

In a building located on the corner of Ave. des Pins and St-Laurent Blvd., between the Ungava pillow factory and a martial arts studio, Alain Mercieca lives in a studio apartment that doubles as a performance space called Theatre 314.



Alain Mercieca

Theatre 314, which he runs with his two other roommates, is preparing for the showing of the second play in the Café Café series; *Cigarettes and Spit*.

"After the first Café Café, I had an excess of ideas," said Mercieca, the 27-year-old playwright, director and leading actor. "People said that it felt like a sitcom. It was the most well-received play I have ever done."

Mercieca is the author of several comedies that have been produced in Toronto, Halifax and Montreal. He also penned a collection of short stories called *The North Yorker* that was shortlisted for the 2005 CBC Literary Awards.

Like the first Café Café, the second production takes place at a fictitious Montreal coffee shop. While both plays focus on young struggling artists, with the first poking fun at painters and sculptors, this one targets contemporary dancers.

Mercieca, who has lived in Montreal for the last six years, wrote the series to have a laugh at the city's pretentious artistic scene. "I love Montreal, but I won't let its faults slide."

When the first play was performed last December, the topic of Montreal's superficial art scene hit home with many audience members. Mark Louch, the manager and set designer of Theatre 314, believed that it was important for the audience to feel connected to the performance.

"I wanted to paint a beautiful picture of where I'm from and what I know," said Mercieca. He described his series as the culmination of incessant lingering in cafés, here and abroad. He explained that being an unemployed writer and independent filmmaker, he often works out of neighbourhood coffee shops, which inspires his work.

The play allows Mercieca and Louch to also make fun of themselves. After all, they too are entrenched in the Montreal art scene. "[The audience] knows that we're not taking ourselves seriously," said Louch.

Café Café: *Cigarettes and Spit* will be running from Jan. 30 to Feb. 7. Tickets can be purchased at the door; \$10 regular admission, \$7 for gargoyle-makers. Theatre 314 is located at 10 Ave. des Pins O., suite 314.

# Bringing the bass

Vancouver duo 'Apocalyptica Presents' on discovering the dubstep scene in the 514

• JESARA SINCLAIR

The room is filled with deep, loud bass, pumping to an off-tempo beat, with fast-paced high tones scattered over it all. Sweaty bodies dance along into the wee hours of the morning.

This is what the parties that Shakila Keyani and Sabine Barbeau-Lawless throw are like. The next one is this Saturday.

Now known as Apocalyptica Presents, the duo is trying to keep up with the demand for dubstep shows in Montreal since their first one in early December.

"People want it," says Barbeau-Lawless. "We want to bring it so hard."

Dubstep is a style of electronic music that started in the U.K. in the late '90s. It came out of the drum-and-bass movement and has slowly made its way over to North America.

In Vancouver, where Keyani and Barbeau-Lawless were first introduced to the sounds, there are hundreds of people that come out to the shows, thrown in basements and warehouses.

"That's what we started doing on Saturday nights," says Barbeau-Lawless. "We'd go out and find the loudest bass possible."

Beyond the music, they found

kindred spirits in the freaks, anarchists and artists that were attracted to the music. Both have trouble describing just how important the community around the scene is to them.

Keyani likens the D.I.Y. attitude to the punk scene she's been a part of for years, where as a self-described "crusty punk kid" she'd play mom and make sure everyone was okay at house shows. Now, she jokes, things are more organized.

In September, Keyani and Barbeau-Lawless left Vancouver and moved to Montreal where they set out to find their scene.

They were directed towards a Komodo Dub show at la Société des Arts Technologiques, which has been an instalment in Montreal for the past decade. With the connections they made, they put on their first show; Taal Mala of the Vancouver dubstep crew LIGHTA! was flown in to play a huge party at the L'Envers loft in Mile End. The show was a huge success, and they found that people wanted more.

"We were coming into the scene, trying to bring what we know," says Keyani, but they found that the Montreal scene had a different feel to it than what they had left out West. "We didn't find the grimy underground."

Now, as Apolyptica Presents,



Shakila Keyani (left) and Sabine Barbeau-Lawless (right) make up Apocalyptica Presents. PHOTO JAMIE ROSS

they promote Freedembass, a party on the second Sunday of every month, at Blizzarts on St-Laurent Blvd., as well as other dubstep, grime and jungle shows.

Because of the demand, they've been keeping busy. They've been designing flyers, handing them out, booking venues and artists,

but not without the help of their friends.

"It's investing in something you're passionate about," says Barbeau-Lawless. "It's all about freedom, and celebration [...] and lots of bass."

Apocalyptica Presents is host-

ing Blade Plates, featuring DJ Pandemic, DJ Tsunami and DJ MC Rhyme on Jan. 31 in the Arthum building, 4525 St-Denis Street. The next Freedembass show is on Feb. 8 at Blizzarts, 3956-A St-Laurent Blvd.. For more information, look for the Apocalyptica and Freedembass groups on Facebook.

## Life outside of the womb

A secret beacon of positive jams at Casa del Popolo

• CODY HICKS

If you're connected to the experimental underground artery of Montreal's music scene you've probably already heard of the Montreal Knows No Wave series at Casa del Popolo.

For those who aren't familiar, it's a pseudo-monthly showcase of experimental music curated by Brian Seeger since (roughly) May 2007. This Thursday will mark volume 19 of Montreal's premier open-mic-style showcase of emerging local talent who may be a bit too weird to break into the scene on their own.

For the uninitiated, No Wave was a brief movement that existed in the late '70s in New York as a reaction to what was then being labelled Punk and New Wave. Although bands like The Contortions and Sonic Youth sounded radically different from each other, they all shared a general attitude, abrasiveness and experimental style.

No Wave became a blanket term that mirrors the newly coined "Weird Punk" that exists to group these unclassifiable bands

into a scene, of sorts.

Seeger is a local champion of experimental music, who books the bands that play. But, in a twist Seeger refers to as a "Russian roulette of awesomeness," he doesn't listen to the band until they're incorporated into his series. Notable alumni include Wax Attic, Black Mammoth and tttttttttttttttt.

This upcoming edition features Montreal's newest heavy-psych-space-punks Grand Trine, bratty trash-punks Dead Wife and The Other Thing, broadcasting positive vibes cloaked under a sea of dark soundscapes and sweaty showmanship.

After a bitter lashing at the hands of Mother Nature I climbed the stairs to Grand Trine's lair/jam space/crash pad and sat down with eternally enthusiastic bassist Tobias Rochman and guitarist Shub Roy to discuss planetary configurations, Punk Rock and the privilege of living in Montreal.

Although they're named after a mystical planetary alignment promoting creativity and communication Rochman insists that theirs is not a group of New Age kooks. Instead, he describes the group as "classic

rock played by fucked-up goons. We're trying to be the Stones but failing beautifully."

A cursory listen to their new tape on local cassette-label Campaign for Infinity confirms the heaviness of their psychedelic riff rock.

**"Classic rock played by fucked-up goons. We're trying to be the Stones but failing beautifully."**

—bassist Tobias Rochman on Grand Trine's sound

Which means it's no surprise they don't sound much like Dead Wife who play a raw, straightforward form of trash-punk. A gang of roommates: Lisa, Walter, Ashley and Rebecca, Dead Wife are already making ripples through cyberspace despite only having started Dec. 16 of last year—a fact that is carved into the wall beside drummer Walter's kit.

Although not necessarily musically coherent, Grand Trine and Dead Wife share a social circle, circumstances and a D.I.Y. operational aesthetic that's bound them together like family.

"We don't sound the same, but we operate the same," says Rochman of Grand Trine. "Shub [Roy] recorded them, and he recorded us. Dead Wife live together and we live together. Six months ago my friends weren't in bands and now they were. Suddenly, everyone's tired of being spectators. Now we're all contributors."

"What I see is a whole bunch of people working together and not just standing around and posing," says Walter of Dead Wife. "Everyone in the band is very busy and goal-oriented, beyond just going out and getting wasted."

This new scene is all about mobilizing and creating. Ironically, Dead Wife, sees the act of getting so busy and so involved as actually liberating, evidenced by the band's motto, "Do what sets your heart free!"

After sitting down with Seeger, Grand Trine and Dead Wife it's become clear that the main unifier in this pseudo-scene is a boundless idealism—and it's infectious.

Fuck it. I'm starting a band.

The show is Jan. 29 at Casa Del Popolo, tickets \$5.



# King Georges

A *Link* reporter throws himself into the middle of press-day for Quebec-born UFC welterweight champion Georges St.Pierre



Georges St-Pierre chokes out sparring partner. PHOTO ANGELA JOHNSTON

"Of course I get scared. We all get scared. But it's the fear that keeps me sharp."

—Georges St.Pierre,  
UFC welterweight champion

• CHRISTOPHER CURTIS

"Ye Gods," I think, "Is this the right place?" The Toyota and I are deep in warehouse country, somewhere in that paved armpit where the Decarie meets the Trans Canada.

It would have been impossible to stumble upon the building accidentally. There were dozens like it—two-storey, yellow-bricked fur coat depots and paper distributors with small windows and a concrete awning. As I make my way through the door and upstairs I can smell it; that unmistakable blend of humidity and sweat, like some kind of Mediterranean beer cheese.

The Tri-Star Gym has all the trappings of a modern mixed martial arts facility. Two boxing rings stand at opposite ends of the matted room. Between the rings are about a dozen six-foot heavy bags, treadmills, speedbags in every corner, an open space for Jiu-Jitsu sparring and a semi-circular fence to

simulate octagon fighting.

A collage of fight posters surrounds us. They range from obscure, mulleted kickboxers and local tough guys to household names like De La Hoya and Hopkins. Two posters, in particular, stand out.

The first is a promotional poster for UFC 87. Hanging just outside the gym's main room, it depicts Tri Star's most famous member, Georges St. Pierre, opposite Jon Fitch. In a match reminiscent of the Ali-Patterson beating, St. Pierre outclassed Fitch for the entirety of the fight. It was his first welterweight title defence and a peerless performance.

The second poster is more of a grainy little printout. It dangles from a pillar, only a small piece of scotch tape holding it in place. If you look closely you can make the person out, BJ Penn. In a matter of days Penn and St. Pierre will fight for the UFC welterweight title in Las Vegas. Although St. Pierre has only officially been training for this fight since September, he has no doubt suspected the fight was coming for years.

There is no music, there are no radios, just a soundstorm of kicks and punches. In the open space ahead, two spandex-clad fighters roll around the mat, intertwined, while a third yells instructions at them.

By the time I get to the second ring, camera

crews are setting up while TV journalists exchange business cards. We're waiting for Georges St. Pierre. In a few minutes he will show up for his workout and hold a press conference. I overhear a female reporter asking the bald guy from Sportsnet about the fight. Neither seem that informed.

"Who's BJ Penn?" she asks.

"He fought St. Pierre three years ago. St. Pierre won a controversial split decision, but ever since then he's been talking shit. He said St. Pierre was a quitter and then told him he'd try to kill him. He's a big trash talker," responds the Sportsnet representative.

It sounded dumb, like after-school-special dumb, but he wasn't lying. Penn says these kinds of things routinely. Mr. Clean didn't bother mentioning that he also backs up the talk with vicious beatings.

Penn is a short, stout, bald man who lacks the muscle definition of a world-class fighter. He looks more like a young bricklayer; broad shoulders, thick legs, but also a certain flabbiness from poor dieting or bad metabolism. When he speaks, his high-pitched Hawaiian accent sounds almost comical.

He may not be much to look at, but Penn's a brawler of the highest order. While a few can match the speed of his punches, none rival their devastating effect. In their 2006 fight, he

bludgeoned St. Pierre with his hands of stone, leaving the young Quebecer badly bruised and bleeding as the first round came to a close. Penn would end up losing the fight by split decision, but the loss gave him a new sense of purpose.

Shortly after losing to St. Pierre, he dropped 15 pounds and competed as a lightweight. At lightweight, Penn displayed a new level of fierceness in his game.

After taking down the division's top two contenders, via rear naked choke, he knocked out its champion last May. Next Saturday Penn will make the move to welterweight in hopes of avenging his first loss to St. Pierre.

This kind of information was lost on some TV journalists. One such reporter, from a dubious French-Canadian network, asked me if St. Pierre's opponent would be stopping by later.

"No, he's in Hawaii."

"On vacation?"

"He lives and trains there."

The man gave me an embarrassed smile and walked away. This set the tone for the rest of the afternoon.

St. Pierre finally makes his way through the door a few minutes later. He looks a lot smaller in person. As he walks by me, I extend my hand.





St-Pierre takes questions from a reporter. PHOTO ANGELA JOHNSTON

“Ca va bien?” I ask.

“Oui, vous?” he replies.

This impresses me. When addressing someone in French, using the word *vous* is a sign of great respect. Almost like using *thou* in English.

Before things get serious St. Pierre’s trainer Faras Zahabi, asks him if he’s seen any good movies lately.

“Kill Bill,” he responds.

As a nod to the film, he affectionately refers to his trainer as Pae Mae, the film’s wizardesque martial arts master. Throughout the day, they would often mimic Pae Mae’s infamous beard stroke on their own imaginary beards.

Training begins with a series of Jiu-Jitsu exercises. St. Pierre lays on his side and allows a sparring partner to get into a dominant choking position. He then struggles to find an escape from the chokehold.

Jiu-Jitsu is extremely technical. If used effectively, one can escape from virtually any submission attempt. For ten minutes the drill presses forward. Every time St. Pierre escapes a submission he has to stop and allow a fresh fighter to apply a new hold on him.

Sitting to my right is UFC light heavy-weight champion Rashad Evans. Evans sports a leather jacket, baggy jeans and goes virtual-

ly unrecognized by the local press. He also looks smaller in person—certainly smaller than the man who knocked out the legendary Chuck Lidell on my TV screen only a few months ago.

He’s flown in from New Mexico to grapple with St. Pierre. Evans is about 35 pounds heavier than the welterweight champion, but insists that St. Pierre is one of the strongest wrestlers he’s trained with at any weight class.

As the exercises continue, roles are reversed. St. Pierre now attempts to submit his opponents. He runs through them with a vengeance. They squirm, but who wouldn’t? While defending an armbar one opponent nearly kicks a poor bystander in the face. Despite his best efforts he gives in. They all give in to the ankle locks, chokeholds and armbars that define a Jiu-Jitsu master.

Zahabi’s training philosophy is simple: Push St. Pierre through the abyss of his natural talent in hopes of finding a limit. His sparring partners are encouraged to beat Georges however they can.

Zahabi flies in a squad of contenders to meet this goal. Heavier guys like Nate Marquardt, Keith Jardine and Rashad Evans simulate BJ Penn’s strength; lighter guys like Donald Cerrone and Yves Jabouin simulate his hand speed. These guys aren’t soup cans,

“As a nod to the film (*Kill Bill*), he (St-Pierre) affectionately refers to his trainer as Pae Mae, the film’s wizardesque martial arts master.”

they’re all champions, former champions and future champions. The sheer depth of talent in St. Pierre’s camp is frightening.

Zahabi and St. Pierre enter the boxing ring. Zahabi’s arms are covered in six-inch padding. They warm up by having St. Pierre bob and weave to avoid punches. Soon it’s bob, weave and counterpunch. Then it’s on to combination punches where the level of intensity explodes. One of the TV cameramen starts shouting orders at Zahabi.

“Make him kick you,” he shouts. The man is promptly ignored. He repeats his order, this time yelling louder. ‘He probably beats his dog,’ I think.

“Make him kick you. It’ll look good on TV.”

Instead of kicking, St. Pierre opts for the Thai clinch. With both his hands, he grabs Zahabi’s neck and delivers a series of knees to the trainer’s padded body. In a real fight, knees to the body are terminal. They keel men

over and open up the head for that game-ending knee. It is easily the most violent element of mixed martial arts.

St. Pierre follows the knees up with some leg and head kicks. Zahabi uses his padding to absorb the blows and yells instructions at his fighter.

“Harder George, harder. Football, football, football.”

Football is code for double kick. On the second kick St. Pierre sends the heavily padded trainer into the ropes. The kick’s impact echoes through the gym like a sonic boom.

This kind of kicking won him the welterweight title against Matt Hughes. Midway through the second round, Georges faked low. When Hughes reached down to block he leaned right into a head kick. Mixed martial artists don’t kick with their feet. The foot has too much give. Instead they harden their shins into blunt weapons.

With the display at its climax, St. Pierre jumps out of the ring and heads for the shower. His shower is closely followed by a Q&A session. This is where things get hairy.

Most of the reporters are out of touch with St. Pierre’s world. They know little or nothing about the sport and come ill-prepared to ask insightful questions.

“I hear Beebe Penn’s been talking a lotta trash. Care to comment?”

“Do you consider this a violent sport?”

“Are you a violent guy or more of a romantic?”

Yes, it’s bad; unimaginative and disrespectful really—but St. Pierre, being a consummate professional, answers them with a smile. It isn’t fake, as it is with so many athletes. St. Pierre has an honesty to him that eludes arrogance.

“It’s a violent sport but not gratuitous. Sometimes I’ll watch hockey and they slash each other with sticks. That’s gratuitous. Now, if I were to gouge my opponent’s eye or bite him it would be another story. There’s a set of rules we adhere to.”

He could have deferred to the stock answer about violence in MMA. In its sixteen-year existence, no one in the UFC has died or suffered a career ending injury in the ring. Impressive when you consider that just this past year, two people died playing hockey.

One of the reporters interrupts. “Do you ever get scared?”

“Of course I get scared. We all get scared. But it’s the fear that keeps me sharp.”

“What about that last fight against Penn? It was awful close.”

“Yes it was, but I’ve become a much better fighter since then. I know he has improved too but I feel that I’m better than him standing up and on the ground. I want to knock him out or submit him. Winning won’t be enough, if I win by decision I’ll be disappointed.”

St. Pierre stays on message, smiling, laughing and promising that, come Saturday, we’d see the best Georges St. Pierre we’ve ever seen. That’s always been the party line, but it hasn’t failed him so far... Save for a few small exceptions.

He is an athlete and a fighter. It’s often hard to tell which comes first; the cold, calculating professional or the balls-out brawler? Those two posters come to mind. In his win over Fitch he displayed an athleticism and technical prowess that is unique to the sport of mixed martial arts. In his first bout with Penn, St. Pierre withstood a barrage that only a fighter could overcome. At the workout, we saw St. Pierre, the athlete, but I have a feeling the fighter is lurking somewhere beneath that big, goofy smile of his.



# Stingers still slumping

Con U struggles to get on track

• DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ

## Concordia 68 UQAM 74

The Concordia women's basketball squad continued their disappointing season with a heartbreaking 74-68 defeat at the hands of the visiting UQAM Citadins Friday night at the Loyola Sports Complex.

The beginning of the game seemed promising for the hard-luck Stingers. Con U forward Anne-Marie Prophete imposed her will in the first quarter—she knocked down a three-pointer before completing a traditional three-point play minutes later to give the Stingers a 21-10 lead.

The Stingers continued to maintain the lead into the second half. Forward Kristin Portwine showed off her post skills with a textbook spin and layup to keep the Stingers up by 10.

Despite the early lead, the Stingers promptly started unravelling. Citadins forward Karine Boudrais capped off an 11-0 UQAM run with a midrange jump-shot to give the visitors their first lead of the game, 29-28. UQAM guard Alix Vandal hit a three at the halftime buzzer to tie the game 37-37.

The Citadins picked up where they left off in the first half, as they scored the first six points of the second half to stun the home crowd.

"We're not consistent," said Stingers head coach Keith Pruden. "We knew they were going to make a run at us. It's not like they wanted to lose."

The Stingers managed to rally near the end of the third quarter behind back-to-back three pointers from captain Krystle Douglas and Andreanne Gregoire-Boudreau to cut the lead to 58-53.

However, the Stingers struggled to continue their momentum in the final quarter. UQAM aggressively attacked the offensive boards, and Con U wilted under the pressure, giving up a whopping 16 offensive rebounds. The Stingers were out-rebounded by a staggering 41-21 margin in the game.

"It's not like they're running some fancy offence that we can't defend," said a frustrated coach Pruden. "They were just throwing it up and getting the rebound. They were getting three shots per possession."

Despite their difficulties rebounding the ball, the Stingers wouldn't lay down in front of their home-crowd. Guard Magalie Beaulieu opened the fourth quarter with two consecutive baskets to cut the deficit to four points.

However, the game turned sour in the final minutes. After yet another offensive rebound by the Citadins, a foul was called on Stingers guard Melissa Campbell. Campbell was infuriated with the call, resulting in a technical foul. UQAM converted on both free-throw attempts, and Citadins forward Irlene Noel scored two of her team-high 19 points on the ensuing possession to put the game out of reach.

The outcome has become a recurring theme for the Stingers, who have continually been on the short end of close games this year, and seem adept at being their own worst enemy.

"We take ourselves out of games offensively," said Pruden. "For a good part of the second quarter we stopped going to the basket, and I wish I could tell you why."

Despite the loss, the Stingers are still alive and kicking in the playoff race in the Quebec conference. "If we start playing well, we can beat anybody," said Pruden, "But right now, that's a big if."

# Give 'em enough rope

Women's basketball team lose third straight by giving up 24 turnovers against UQAM

• JOHNNY NORTH

## Concordia 48 UQAM 61

Getting outscored in the second quarter along with countless turnovers cost the Concordia Stingers women's basketball squad against l'Université du Québec à Montréal Citadins in a 61-48 loss last Saturday at the UQAM Centre Sportif.

"On the positive side, we controlled their offensive rebounds much better [than Friday]," said Stingers head coach Keith Pruden. "On the negative side, we turned the ball over 24 times and we shot 37 per cent from the floor. [...] We didn't play with a lot of poise offensively, and that's a problem."

UQAM started the game off with an early lead, but tenacious hustle by Concordia's forwards saw them go on 8-4 run at the end of the first quarter—Con U was up 13-9 going into the second quarter.

Suddenly, every shot for the Stingers was coming up short. While they didn't give UQAM any easy baskets, UQAM clearly frustrated Con U with timely steals and showed a lot more composure when it came to questionable fouls.

"We're letting the other team take advantage of us," said Krystle Douglas, captain of the Stingers. "Once we're down we're down, on ourselves and on each other. It's hard when you only score four points in the second quarter."

"It's not street ball. You can't just dribble around and do whatever," said Pruden. "It doesn't work that way, it doesn't even work that well in street ball. Until we address that and be consistent offensively, then we're not going to win any games."

With the Stingers down 27-17 going into the third quarter, they made a valiant comeback effort in the second half. Second-year Stingers forward Anne-Marie Prophete led all players in points with 19 and led her team in rebounds with 14. Unfortunately for the Stingers, they got beat the majority of the time on rebounds down the stretch both defensively and offensively.

With the loss, Con U is now fifth place in their division, two points behind the McGill Martlets for the last playoff spot. With their current losing



Stingers forward Anne-Marie Prophete led the Stingers in scoring in both games over the weekend. PHOTO CHRIS GATES

streak, hope for a possible revival is slowly fading.

"We try to be confident on the court, but it's so hard when you're losing every single game," said Douglas. "It's like we're always fighting for a play-off spot, it shouldn't be the case because we have a really talented team [...] but that's what's happening."

"My personality has never adapted well to being 'I tried the hardest'," said Pruden. "It's not enough for me. There's not a team in the league that we can't beat, so why aren't we? I'm not really interested in explanations anymore, I just want to see a change."

Con U now has a week off until their next series against the top team in their division the Laval Rouge et Or. First game takes place in Quebec City at Université Laval with the game starting at 6 p.m. Second game takes place on Feb. 7 at Concordia's Loyola Gym at 6 p.m.

# Wild battle for first place continues

Men's basketball team can't keep up with UQAM in final minutes

• JOHNNY NORTH

## Concordia 61 UQAM 68

An exciting back and forth affair ended in a 68-61 loss for the Concordia Stingers last Saturday against l'Université du Québec à Montréal Citadins at the UQAM Centre Sportif.

UQAM had the lead after the first quarter, but they were only up 15-14. By the end of the second quarter they were deadlocked at 31 each.

By the end of the third quarter, turnovers hurt Concordia on the scoreboard. UQAM made them pay by nailing the majority of their three-pointers.

"I think it was won in the dying minutes when we did a good job on the offensive boards," said UQAM head coach Olga Hrycak. "Concordia has a lot more experience compared to us. I started three first-year rookies, I think there was a bit of 'rookiehood' there [at the start], but we overcame it."

"What was it, 23 turnovers we had?" asked Levi Vann, a Stingers guard. "That's the game right there. Those are opportunities you can't give up. We had a couple of mental lapses with fouls too."

By the fourth quarter, fouls hurt the Stingers, as UQAM was going to the line on almost every attack in the final minutes. Despite the loss, Damian Buckley, last year's

Concordia's Male Athlete of the Year, led all players on the night with 22 points.

"They outplayed us, we beat ourselves too," said John Dore, head coach of the Stingers. "There was a lot of mental errors and mental lapses, and they capitalized on it."

Dore was satisfied that the Stingers (6-4) were able to keep the score close with UQAM (6-4). Now that his team has split their series with UQAM, McGill (3-7) and Laval (5-3) thus far, it could play a major factor on which team gets home court in the playoffs.

"It's going to be down to the wire and I hope it's Concordia-UQAM in the final," said Hrycak. "I think

those are the two teams that deserve to be there. [Laval] are a different team without J.P. Morin. I give them an outside chance, but seriously based on the success we've had against McGill and Laval, it really should be the two top teams."

"Whoever we face," said Vann. "We're just going to go at them 100 per cent. It doesn't really matter."

Con U now has a week off until their next series against the top team in their division the Laval Rouge et Or. First game takes place in Quebec City at Université de Laval with the game starting at 8 p.m. Second game takes place on Feb. 7 at Concordia's Loyola Gym at 4 p.m.



Dwayne Buckley (#10) and Eric Cote-Kougnima (#15) fight for loose ball. PHOTO CHRIS GATES

# Buckley Bros. unstoppable

## Dwayne & Damian Buckley lead the way for Stingers men's basketball squad

• DIEGO PELAEZ GAETZ

### Concordia 76 UQAM 59

In a battle between the two top-ranked teams in Quebec, the Concordia men's basketball team showed off their defensive prowess in throttling the visiting UQAM Citadins 76-59 Friday night at the Loyola Sports Complex.

The teams started the game evenly matched, but Stingers star point guard Damian Buckley quickly imposed his will on the game, slashing to the rim with reckless abandon to give the Stingers a 21-14 lead after the first quarter.

The wheels came off quickly for UQAM in the second half. The Citadins were held without a basket for nearly a five-minute stretch.

The Stingers were able to build their lead to 33-18 on a three pointer by sharp-shooter Levi Vann with under two minutes remaining before halftime. UQAM managed only nine points in the second quarter.

"I thought we did a very good job defensively," said Stingers head coach John Dore. "We stopped their penetration, and we're learning to help each other better. It's a team effort defensively."

The Citadins were not going down without a fight. Guard Adil El-Makssoud opened the quarter with a three-pointer, and the Citadins clawed their way back to within seven points on another three-pointer by El-Makssoud minutes later.

However, Buckley came to the rescue for the Stingers, as he made a brilliant steal before going the length of the court for a layup.

Buckley repeated the same situation again minutes later, and finished the game with a whopping eight steals. Buckley is

ranked second in the nation with 3.6 steals per game.

The Citadins then responded in turn, with guard Eric Cote-Kougnima picking off an inbounds pass and finishing at the rim. The steal sparked a 6-0 run for UQAM that cut the Stingers' lead to four, the closest the Citadins would get all game.

A Buckley would again come to the rescue for the Stingers; this time, senior leader Dwayne. The imposing 6'5" guard attacked the UQAM frontcourt, drawing two fouls and unleashing a hellacious dunk. Vann drained another triple to put the Stingers up by 13 and quell any comeback hopes for the visitors.

"That's one of the things I do," said Dwayne when asked about his leadership role on the team. "I try to share the ball and play D all the time, but sometimes when the team needs a lift, I can do that."

The game ended with a little more excitement for the fans in attendance, as Stingers rookie high-flier Evens Laroche wowed the near-capacity crowd with a soaring alley-oop to further demoralize the opposition and seal the 76-59 final score.

"If you look at the second half point spread, we were alright," said Citadins head coach Olga Hrycak. "We had ten layup opportunities, and we came away empty. We can't be afraid to score the easy baskets."

Considering the quality of the opposition, the Stingers' dominance becomes even more impressive. "I'm a little surprised (by the margin of victory)," said Damian. "They've been the toughest team to go against in my four years here."

However, they knew the fight that was in store for them on the road the next day. "Our last game there was our worst showing all year," said Damian. "Our intensity has to be higher."



Stingers center Jamal Gallier fights for position. PHOTO CHRIS GATES

## UQTR powerplay sinks Stingers

### A key injury and flu bug also play a factor in men's hockey loss

• DAVID KAUFMANN

### Concordia 3 UQTR 6

The Concordia Stingers men's hockey team suffered their worst loss of the season last Wednesday as they fell to the country's number two-ranked team, the Universite de Quebec a Trois-Rivieres Patriotes, at the Quebec Colisée by a score of 6-3.

The Stingers came into the game with many players out of the line-up due to injuries and a flu bug that has recently hit the team.

The game got off to a great start for the Stingers. Centre Brad Gager scored a powerplay goal less than three minutes into the game to put the visitors up by one.

However, the opposition proved to Con U why they were the

one of the best teams in the country when Patriotes centre Etienne Bellavance Martin got one past Stingers goalie Maxime Joyal to tie the game a mere 15 seconds later.

UQTR defenceman Tommy Lafontaine gave the home side the lead minutes later when he scored a powerplay marker. Not long after, Patriotes centre Alexandre Demers netted his 15th goal of the season before Stingers right-winger Nicolas D'Aoust put them back in it to trail the opposition by one.

Although they were being out-shot 31-19 after two periods, the Stingers managed to keep it a close game as the two teams traded goals in the second.

However, the wheels started coming off in the third. UQTR's right-winger Alexandre Blais

scored the team's fourth powerplay goal of the night after Stingers right-winger Nicolas Sciangua got a marginal slashing penalty.

**"Their powerplay killed us, [...] we've got to be more disciplined."**

—Nicolas D'Aoust,  
Stingers right winger

To make matters worse, the Stingers found themselves in the penalty box six times in the third period alone. Finally, UQTR's right-winger Mathieu Simoneau capitalized on one of the Stingers' third period penalties, as he scored the fifth powerplay goal of the game for the Patriotes.

Stingers defenceman Michael Blundon was among those unhappy with his team's results. "I think we didn't show up like we could

have. We didn't really follow the game plan; we could have played more solid," said Blundon. "We didn't really make the effort."

D'Aoust, who had a goal and an assist on the night, blamed the poor penalty kill on the loss. "Their powerplay killed us," said D'Aoust. "Their powerplay was strong and we took bad penalties all game long, so we've got to be more disciplined."

While the Stingers' penalty-killers weren't playing up to par, Stingers head coach Kevin Figsby blamed the loss on the fact that three players were missing.

"When you've got three of your top penalty killers out, that then breaks up all of your penalty killing rotations so we gave up five goals on the penalty kill," Figsby said concerning his team's loss.

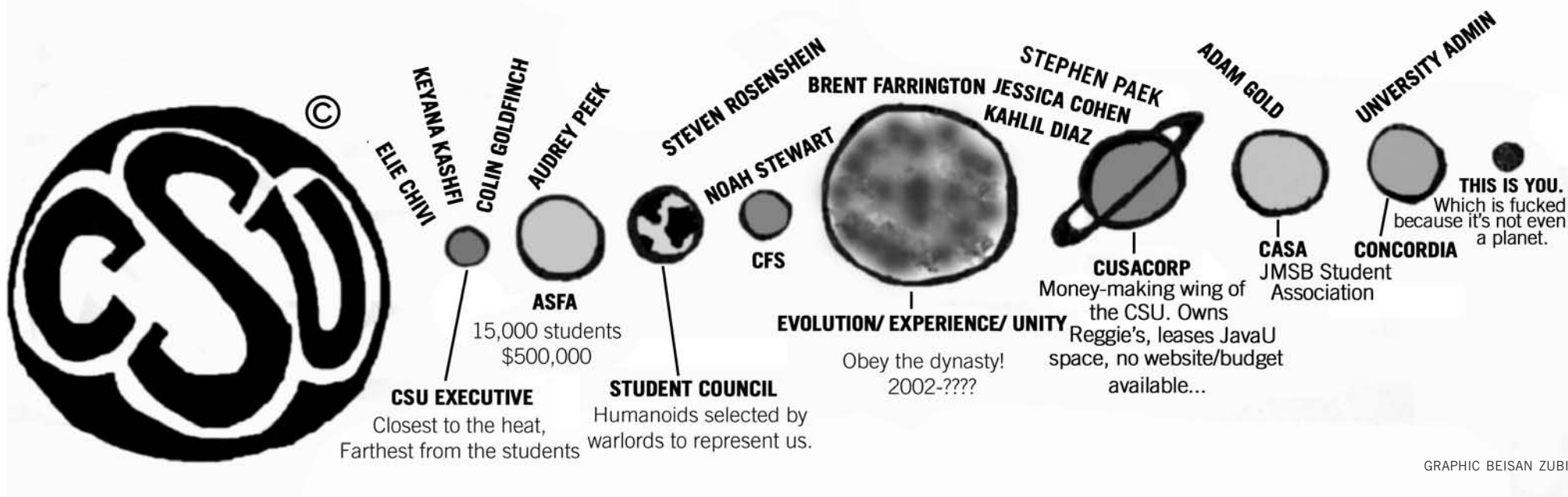
While his team didn't have the best of nights, it didn't bother Figsby so much because of the team's condition. "I looked at some of the guys taking the penalties tonight; you want to get frustrated with them, but you know they're giving all they've got because they probably shouldn't be on the ice tonight (due to the flu)," said Figsby.

The Stingers will hope to have their number-one scorer Mike Baslyk back tomorrow night when they face off against the McGill Redmen at the Ed Meagher arena at 8:00 p.m.



# The CSU's insular system

Our student government is imploding, what are you gonna do?



## What can and must change:

1.

Students must hold the CSU accountable for the money they are entrusted with. Demand to see financial documents, question their budgets and hold them responsible for performing simple processes, such as the Annual General Meeting.

2.

Run for office. All levels of student government will have elections soon. Nominating oneself is super-easy and election expenses are compensated.

3.

If all else fails, there should be a serious inquiry into the responsibilities that student groups are entrusted with. If the election process remains so flawed that the same shrill-voiced Banana Republicans stay in power, then perhaps we should consider dismantling the CSU. Start fresh. Fire everybody. Declare bankruptcy. Clear all debts and rewrite the constitution.

• BEISAN ZUBI

The Concordia Student Union is in a lot of crap right now, but maybe this financial pile of shit is just the sort of situation these people deserve.

The last six months have been a continuation of the misuse of student money and corruption that I have been watching for the last three years. But this time the executive doesn't seem to care enough to pretend to follow the rules.

Our student leaders have led us into a boring, apathetic, hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-in-deficit CSU. In light of this I offer you a state of the Student Union address.

### Elections and petitions

Elections at Concordia have always been an exercise in masochism for anyone trying to get involved outside the Unity, formerly known as Experience, formerly known as Evolution slate. Just in case you're not aware of the CSU executives' blatant disregard for the rules, here is a short list:

1. The CSU has not had an Annual General Meeting since 2006. These meetings are where the Chief Electoral Officer's election report is supposed to be submitted for approval. Since this has not happened for the last two elections, logic would follow that our executives are illegally squatting on the seventh floor and could be evicted.

I have seen no riots on the mezz or bike locks on their pretty glass doors, so I can only assume they're forthcoming.

2. Keyana Kashfi, the CSU president, has consistently misled students about what took place during the last referendum. When Kashfi discovered that there was no CEO for the referendum to eliminate the Sustainability Action Fund she tried to go ahead with the election anyway.

"We knew that he was a student, in our minds," claimed CSU VP Communications Elie Chivi. The election was eventually cancelled when Council discovered CEO Jason Druker was not registered for courses.

Kashfi's solution? Illegally and unilaterally appoint a new CEO.

Chivi has said, "When [Keyana] found out Druker wasn't a student, she halted

the referendum."

However, university spokesperson Chris Mota has confirmed that Kashfi contacted Institutional and Information Technology Services telling them that Nestor Sanajko—then one of Druker's Deputy Electoral Officers—was the new CEO. Kashfi did this before the referendum was set to take place.

### Our student leaders have led us into a boring, apathetic, hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-in-deficit CSU.

3. The CSU changed the Standing Regulations after a group of students collected 3,600 signatures to recall the executive. Problem is, they haven't approved the minutes of the council meeting where the changes were made, making the changes unofficial. The Judicial Board is still reviewing the petition's case, but a recall election seems more unlikely every day.

Former Chair Jessica Nudo told Council that she had gone through all 3,600 names on the petition and crosschecked it with a CSU list.

Nudo refused to comment and quit her job the day after dismissing the petition, meaning that she is not held accountable for her decision, nor can the next chair qualify or explain it. Her letter of resignation accused some of having a personal hidden agenda. If you would like to see the entirety of this letter, ask any CSU councillor or look in the dictionary under the word "irony."

### Money

The CSU is dealing with a huge deficit of nearly \$500,000. Currently the CSU charges students \$1.75 per credit, which equals \$52.50 for a 30 credit year. The CSU argues that the money isn't missing; the 2005-07 executives overspent it. The problem was first noticed in June 2007 when then-VP Finance Fauve Castagna noticed that all of the CSU's bank accounts had been seized by the Canadian Revenue Agency, as they had been since April of that year.

The most culpable executives from '06-07, President Khaleed Juma and VP Finance

Saleena Hussein have been noticeably silent about their knowledge of the missing money, but current CSU VP Finance Andre Leroy has asserted that "Saleena must have known, should have known," even though it was "still possible to function on internal accounts."

Why students have been left in the dark about our missing money for two Unity slates is still being revealed.

In addition to the money overspent, back taxes on those two years are still owed. This could increase the CSU deficit substantially.

### ASFA

Political manoeuvring trickled down to the lower levels of student government when Adam Gold, the Commerce and Administration Students' Association president, accused an ASFA executive of money mismanagement.

His accusatory letter, sent directly to all ASFA councillors and executives—except the one he was pointing the finger at—called for investigation and censure.

Gold was embarrassingly rejected by ASFA, when the executive in question pulled out 20 pages of receipts and proof. After which a motion demanding a letter of apology—and encouraging a personal apology from Gold—was drafted.

There is also evidence of a growing rift between ASFA and the CSU.

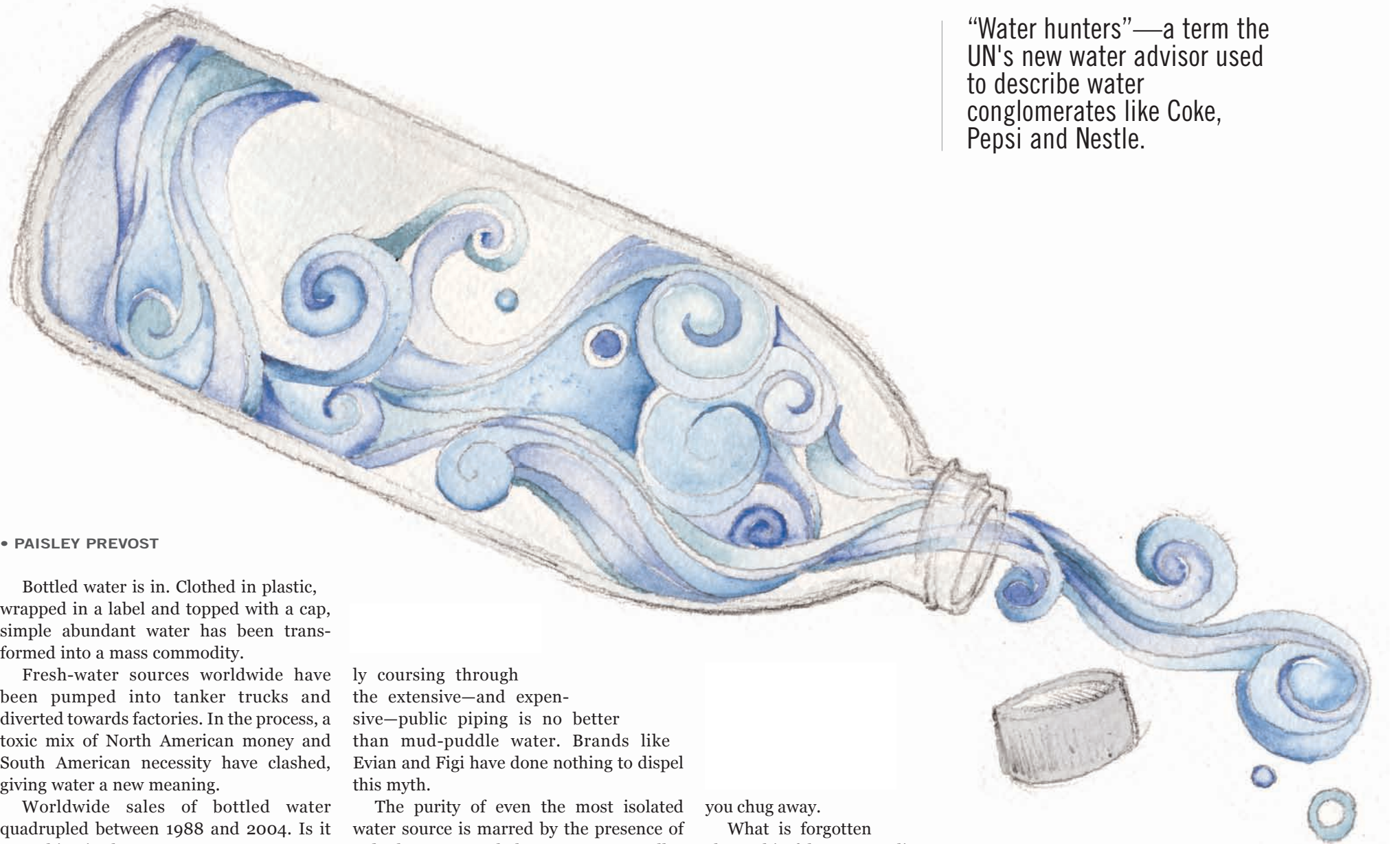
CUSACorp, the CSU's profit-making wing, recently cancelled ASFA Hockey Nights at Reggie's, citing low profits. Reggie's Hockey Nights have now been taken over by CASA—unchanged and suddenly financially viable.

ASFA then decided to undertake its annual New York City trip without CSU involvement, citing the latter's money problems. The CSU is now planning an independent New York trip. When asked about the growing rift, Chivi stated, "ASFA may be taking things in that direction, but we actually have money at stake."

CASA's rising star is a good indication that you may be seeing Gold's face peering back at you from this year's Unity slate posters—he should try to control any premature celebration. They haven't Photoshopped the new slate into the old posters yet.

# The new meaning of H<sub>2</sub>O

The water bottle sensation has transformed water into something it isn't



“Water hunters”—a term the UN's new water advisor used to describe water conglomerates like Coke, Pepsi and Nestle.

• PAISLEY PREVOST

Bottled water is in. Clothed in plastic, wrapped in a label and topped with a cap, simple abundant water has been transformed into a mass commodity.

Fresh-water sources worldwide have been pumped into tanker trucks and diverted towards factories. In the process, a toxic mix of North American money and South American necessity have clashed, giving water a new meaning.

Worldwide sales of bottled water quadrupled between 1988 and 2004. Is it something in the water?

The popularity of the water bottle itself can be attributed to successful branding. Water has been marketed as a necessary component to your image. The logo on the bottle's label corresponds to a specific type of manufactured lifestyle. Along with the fancy car and the shiny jewellery, the bottle of water in your hand says much about who you are.

“Water hunters”—a term the UN's new water advisor used to describe conglomerates like Coke, Pepsi and Nestle—that bottle much of the world's water have also used marketing to give certain empty attributes to their products. Water is now classified by “purity,” “freshness” and “cleanliness.”

This useless language has served to reinforce the view that the clear liquid current-

ly coursing through the extensive—and expensive—public piping is no better than mud-puddle water. Brands like Evian and Fiji have done nothing to dispel this myth.

The purity of even the most isolated water source is marred by the presence of tadpoles, rotten whale carcasses or pollution. In reality, a water label reading 'pure and fresh' is only a guarantee that the chemicals present in the final product will be less noticeable.

A classic example is the colourful and distinctive Fiji bottle, “untouched by man” the label claims. Unlike the St. Lawrence that flows through your tap everyday, this bottled water also offers you geographic customization.

The trick for marketers is to find how people like to be seen, and to create a water bottle that is valued enough to flaunt, carry and gulp. By buying bottled water, you are now buying something to represent you as a person; establishing a bond between water bottle carrier and water bottle. If the water bottle depicts pure, fresh or clean, you could be viewed as a darling daisy as

you chug away.

What is forgotten about this false personality is that bottled water is not a friend of our environment. It takes 178 million litres of oil to produce the plastic needed for the water bottles consumed in the United States yearly. This figure doesn't come close to describing the pollution caused by the transportation, cooling and disposal of all those bottles.

Water activists working outside the profitable water sector remind us that our quickly evaporating fresh water supply is one of the critical issues of our time. The Food & Water Watch is an organization challenging the corporate control and abuse of our water resources.

The FWW strives to empower people to take action and transform the public consciousness about what we drink. Through public action, Bechtel, a U.S.-based utility

company, was forced to stop bullying public water services in Bolivia; the American Congress was reminded to protect that nation's water supply with a clean water trust fund and Canadians were reminded that the Great Lakes are not for sale.

The money spent hourly on bottled water, a wasteful and inefficient delivery system, should be diverted to the proper monitoring of public water supplies to keep them clean and secure. Tap water is safe and people should feel safe drinking it.

Water has been transformed into colourful corporate kitsch. If water bottles are now an element of our style, we have been left with something very shallow indeed.

GRAPHIC VIVIEN LEUNG

52

litres of bottled water consumed per capita annually.

20

per cent of annual Bolivian income spent on water.

\$116.2

billion USD spent annually on alcohol.

25

per cent of bottled water in Canada filled from municipal water sources.



# Green space

## The hypocrisy of the 'Green' bandwagon

• MADELYN LIPSZYC

The recent surge in environmental consciousness has left many with an incomplete picture of the Earth's troubles. While Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* sparked worldwide debate about global warming, green concerns have yet to touch all aspects of the planet's grimy state.

Businesses have captured the public's partial ignorance and have begun to develop new products that meet today's loose green standard.

Clorox, a household name associated with bleach, is an example of the value of "corporate green." Clorox proudly proclaims, "for generations we have been committed to making products that promote a cleaner world and healthier homes." But bleach is a poisonous chemical whose production creates dioxins—highly toxic compound that exist forever and are extremely harmful to marine organisms—and is linked to cancer.

There is nothing clean or healthy about bleach, but Clorox's hypocrisy illustrates the illusion companies are producing. There is a widespread belief in corporate circles that any product labelled green will sell better, regardless of its environmental effects.

Some companies invoke the green label when their product uses a natural ingredient or is more than five per cent environmentally friendly, making nearly all products qualify for green status. This shortsighted view is not only morally empty, it is wrong.

There are better ways to use the environmentally-friendly logo that are not only honest, but are also profitable. The bicycle industry will be worth \$25 billion within a decade; this is a sector of the economy that can be green, exportable and has near-universal appeal. A bicycle made in Laval will sell just as well in Montreal as one from Mumbai.

But customers should beware of even the honest green labels. Shoppers Drug Mart recently unveiled a new food line with 170 organic food products. Unfortunately, the foods' packaging is non-recyclable and is often larger than necessary. To be mindful of health while being neglectful of waste is hypocritical.

Off the Wall Mobile Billboards, an Edmonton-based company has a slogan, "welcome to greener grass." The company claims to be green because its digital advertising allows one truck driving through the downtown core at rush hour to play 20 advertisements; better than 20 traditional trucks they argue. The claim that a truck driving around with an ad can be green is nothing short of ludicrous.

In this time of environmental interest, it must be remembered that green is a subjective concept. While a company may feel that being green means emitting five per cent less pollution, most will not follow that definition.

Consumers must be sceptics, ask questions and read labels. Even truly green products may hurt the environment more than they help. For the green label to stand for anything, consumers will need to be the real defenders of what it means to be green.



Letters@thelink.concordia.ca

### CEO patronage is business as usual

I would like to respond to two letters in last week's edition of *The Link* by Adrien Severyns and Laura Schülke. In these letters, it was stated that the Appointments Committee, a small group of CSU Councillors, had reviewed the list of applicants for the position of Chief Electoral Officer and had only allowed a small number of them to actually be considered for the position. Mr. Severyns further stated that their selections did not seem to be based on skill, experience or any rational set of criterion.

Having sat on Council myself, I can say that this is absolutely standard operating procedure. I would first like to state that I have no knowledge of any of the candidates for this particular position nor am I familiar with the present composition of the Appointments Committee.

That said, during my time as councillor, whenever a position became available that council had to vote for, the Appointments Committee would thoroughly vet the list of applicants and recommend a group of their friends and allies, making sure to reject any political opponents or unknowns. Competence was generally not a factor in the decision making. I recall objecting to this hiring process numerous times to no avail.

In one particularly egregious incident, the committee presented their shortlists for openings on the Senate and various other committees. I requested to see the complete list of applicants and, sure enough, every single applicant affiliated with the governing slate, Unity, had made it onto the shortlist, while every applicant affiliated with either of the opposition slates, Go and Impact, had been blacklisted. A few councillors objected and it was back to business as usual.

This letter is not meant as an attack on the members of the Appointments Committee; during my time on Council I found them quite nice and very approachable. However, in the context of a partisan Council, giving a small committee, generally dominated by members of the governing slate, the power to essentially blacklist whoever they choose from political appointments is a recipe for disaster.

Given the current state of the CSU, I find it hard to believe that this type of behaviour will stop any time soon. I offer my sincere condolences to anyone naively applying for one of these positions that actually thinks appointments are based on merit, and not decided beforehand behind closed doors.

—James Doyle

Former Councillor, Arts and Science, 2007-2008

### GazaU intimidates Pro-Gaza demonstrators

On Jan. 21, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, a Concordia student club, along with supporters held a silent visual display to show their solidarity with the people of Gaza following the recent massacre.

By holding hands and wearing placards on which there was information pertaining to the latest Israeli strikes on Gaza, the siege, and the humanitarian crisis, the student participants hoped to send a message to fellow students and faculty that although a ceasefire has been declared, the situation in Palestine is still very dire.

Gaza's population is now struggling to rebuild a destroyed infrastructure while continuing to live under siege and blockade. Over 1,300 civilians were killed as a result of the Israeli Defence Force's recent strikes, many of them women and children.

As a student at Concordia University, I was very surprised to see the response this silent visual display received from Concordia's security team. Although the visual display in no way breached any of Concordia University's bylaws, and although the visual display was silent, peaceful, not blocking bystanders, not flyer-ing or approaching other students, a Concordia security guard used acts of intimidation in order to shut down the display.

Not only did a security guard come around and take photographs of each individual student participating, they furthered their intimidation by calling the police—who proceeded to stand on the side and tell the participants that they were in fact not doing anything wrong.

The security guards at Concordia are essential in maintaining the order and function of the school, this I understand and I am grateful for their presence. I would hope, however, as a student at Concordia, that my security guards would help maintain the peaceful objectives, like those of SPHR, instead of trying to stir up confrontation and intimidate students who were holding hands in a line, silently showing their support for a people who so desperately need it right now.

—Yasmine Hassan

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights

**The Link's letters and opinions policy:** The deadline for letters is 4 p.m. on Friday before the issue prints. *The Link* reserves the right to verify your identity via telephone or email. We reserve the right to refuse letters that are libelous, sexist, homophobic, racist or xenophobic. The limit is 400 words. If your letter is longer, it won't appear in the paper. Please include your full name, weekend phone number, student ID number and program of study. The comments in the letters and opinions section do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board.



**Opinions workshop  
This Friday, Jan. 30  
Be there or be a parallelogram**

# crswrdpzzlol

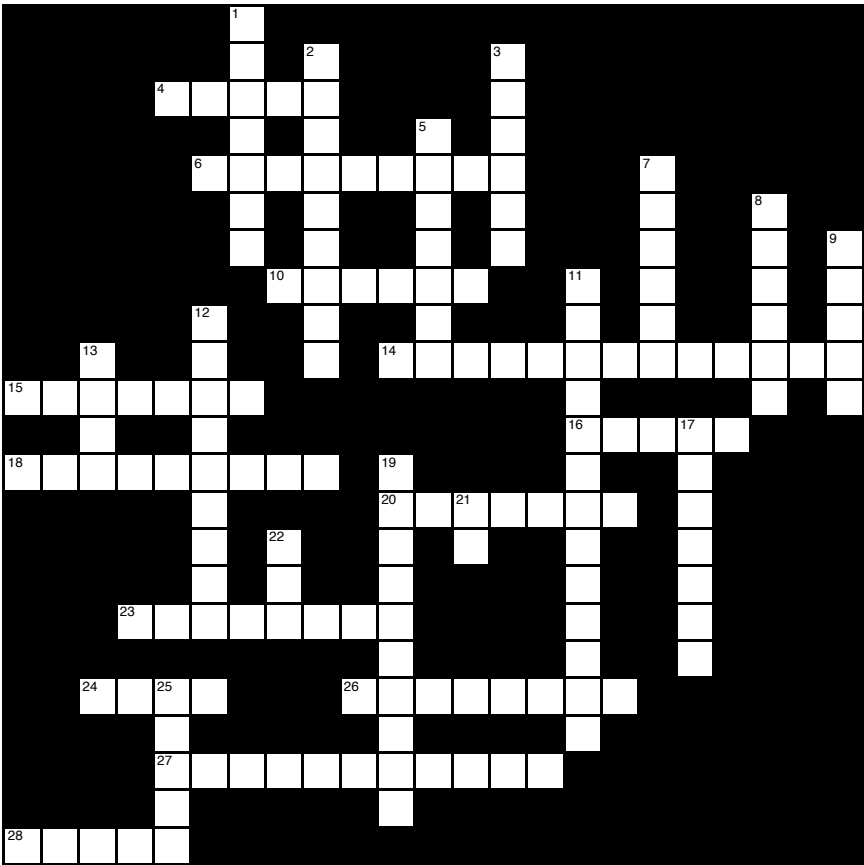
LOW-TECH EDITION • R. BRIAN HASTIE & BUTTER-CHURNROSA

ACROSS

- 4. The old automobile, provided it wore a saddle
- 6. Provides food and rural companionship. Should stay in the field, except during floods
- 10. Provided a source of illumination before the filament put that to an end
- 14. The bad news is that I put a monk's lifework to shame and can now freely distribute the results
- 15. Favourite hobby of people back in the day; first step in a witch-hunt; also used on single mothers
- 16. Like glue, but with sharper edges
- 18. The artificial equivalent to dipping a bucket into a lake
- 20. Another favourite hobby of people back in the day, though the selection was limited. The Bible or Shakespeare anyone?
- 23. Pieces of lumber set ablaze for warmth
- 24. Animal house... but it can also store wheat
- 26. A third favourite hobby of people back in the day; the rhythmic beating of a set of limbs
- 27. The Amish enjoy doing this daily. Weird Al suggestively does this in his video for the single 'Amish Paradise'
- 28. Houses, before walls and huts were thought up

DOWN

- 1. Some might call this raping the land for personal gain. I call it survival
- 2. Beep beep beepbeepbeep beep beep. Certainly a far cry from 'ring ring'
- 3. Long gun without rifling, fired from the shoulder
- 5. A shoe repairer. He can also read you bedtime stories and rub your tummy when it aches
- 7. Stone-age cellphone, provided you bring the cans
- 8. When in doubt, it gets the job done; it's a tool that doubles as a weapon; also uncomfortable to keep inside of a small pocket
- 9. These simple-living folk will definitely not be doing the crossword online
- 11. Circular tool used to produce yarn. Nearly hypnotic when in action
- 12. "You mean we won't have to bash the can of Chef Boyardee open on the curb to eat tonight? Sweet"
- 13. The small-time operator's vending tool of choice.



Usually have wheels for further mobility, especially when the operator rips off the townfolk and runs

17. Group opposed to automated looms; they also hold congresses every few years to discuss their decidedly anti-technologist ways

19. This process is instrumental in making bread

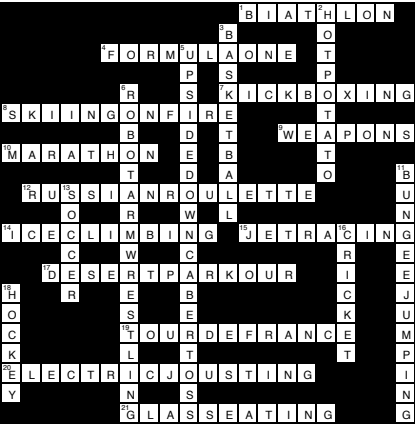
21. Sharp-edged tools used to hack trees, bodies. Also strikes fear in the hearts of people when held in public

22. Milk and meat giving organism; can't be catapulted or shot out of a cannon easily

25. Clang together to create the spark that ignites the fire; can also be chucked. Watch out world

issue 19

solutionz



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY FEBRUARY 1, 1994

“McGill music department trades autonomy for equipment from Sony”

• JUSTIN GIOVANNETTI

In 1992, McGill University traded away control of its 90-year-old, internationally-renowned music school for \$250,000 worth of equipment from Sony.

In exchange for the high-end audio equipment, Sony was granted de facto control of the faculty's curriculum committee and appointed its VP Audio Operations, Christian Constantinov, as a professor in the department.

Nearly two years after the deal between McGill and Sony was signed, the university's Senate and Board of Governors were made aware of the contract. By that time, Constantinov had been sitting on the faculty's curriculum committee as a representative for Sony—while also being paid by McGill—for nearly one year.

“Completely shocking,” said Micheal Temelini, one of McGill's governors. “They hired this guy totally without regard for regular hiring procedures.”



Senator Sam Noumoff said that McGill was giving Sony a free training camp for their employees. “Because Sony has input at the teaching level...they can ensure that McGill grads are well-trained in the types of skills Sony doesn't want to pay to teach.” Noumoff continued by stating that, “the public purse is paying for their training.”

The McGill Senate voted on Jan. 19, 1994 to condemn any deal that granted

a corporation control of the university's curriculum. Constantinov remained on the faculty of music's curriculum committee until mid-1995, when he quit his position at the university.

Although there are no longer any Sony representatives on McGill's curriculum committees, the faculty of music—now the Schulich School of Music—maintains close links with Sony, Philips, Harman Kardon and Bang & Olufsen.

## editorial

### City tells protesters to leave faces exposed

Montreal is a cold city. Protests are a constant part of the political scene. City Hall wants to make wearing scarves illegal. If Mayor Gerald Tremblay and the Montreal police get their way, it will soon be against the law for protesters to cover their faces. The purpose of the proposed bylaw is to make protesters responsible for their actions, and avoid the damage caused by last year's two major riots.

The irony is that last year's most damaging riot was aimed at the overzealous trigger finger of Montreal's police force, the same group that convinced Tremblay of the need for the rule change. It would not be a terrible leap in logic to assume that passing this bylaw would make it easy for the police to arrest those who oppose their violent tactics.

The hypocrisy is stunning when the police, in full riot gear, faces covered, names stripped off and badges removed, face-off with protesters. All this despite the fact that the police code of ethics makes it a requirement for an officer to display a name and badge number while in uniform.

Protesters, dressed for a masquerade ball, lampooned the proposed bylaw last night when they gathered outside of City Hall. If a protest against a blatant form of censorship can be so laughable, what does it say about the bylaw?

Just because someone wants to take part in a protest doesn't mean that they want their face plastered across the front page of *The Gazette* for potential employers or professors to see.

As if that weren't enough, this bylaw could have a profound impact on those who cover their faces due to religious custom. By passing this law, the city would deprive an important community of its right to protest, simply due to its culture.

With the enforcement of this law being at the discretion of the police, the question remains: where is the line drawn between a demonstration and a protest? And who will draw that line?

If City Council ultimately approves the bylaw, be prepared for the chanting of protesters to be drowned out by the chattering of teeth.

—Sebastien Cadieux  
Editor-in-Chief

### Who is Brent Farrington?

Brent Farrington had been understandably absent at our university since holding the Concordia Student Union presidency in 2004, at the head of the New Evolution slate. Graduates are expected to move on with their lives.

Not so anymore. Farrington, the current Deputy Chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students, is back at Concordia, doing double duty as the interim-Chair of the CSU—the person in charge of the administration of day-to-day Council business.

After the disarray caused by the jarring resignation of former Chair Jessica Nudo at the Jan. 14 Council meeting, Farrington was found to be a suitable replacement.

Had CSU councillor Jessica Cohen (JMSB) had her wish, Farrington would have been a full-time chair. Cohen's motion to install Farrington was defeated when he himself ruled that he couldn't take the position without an election—one that he is sure to win.

Without any consultation with the student body, one of the founders of the Unity dynasty and a top official for a political lobby group in Ottawa has become, for a limited time, the second most powerful student at Concordia... err, non-student.

This is an excerpt of *The Link's* reporting on Farrington's last election at Concordia:

“Even if Brent Farrington's slate is the choice of students, the irregularities and electoral violations in this election are too serious to ignore this time.

If the allegations against them are true, some of New Evolution's supporters have broken the most basic rules of elections. Hiring people to physically intimidate opposing candidates, getting access to contact info through a fake tuition campaign and running a \$10,000-plus push-poll with permission from the University.”

Although Farrington's interim appointment signals a break with a recent history of inexperience and a near-constant bungling of the Chair's most basic duties, the Concordia Student Union should not forget about the student simply for expediency's sake.

The CSU cannot have a lobbyist calling the shots, especially one with a checkered history like Farrington's. It is time to leave the past in the past.

—Justin Giovannetti  
Opinions editor